The Economic Front Series

PRACTICAL CRITICISM

(APPLIED CRITICISM OF PROSE AND POETRY)

By
W. R. GOODMAN, M.A.

ECONOMIC FRONT PUBLICATIONS - LAHORE

The Economic Front Series

PRACTICAL CRITICISM

(APPLIED CRITICISM OF PROSE AND POETRY)

By
W. R. GOODMAN, M.A.

ECONOMIC FRONT PUBLICATIONS
URDU BAZAR – LAHORE-2

Price Rs. 5.00

THE ECONOMIC FRONT

We have to fight our enemy not only in the battlefield but on the Economic Front also. To the wonder of us all, import of books from the enemy country tuned to lacs of Rupees—strengthening unknowingly the aggressive hands.

This Front has, therefore, been established with the following aims in view:—

1. To discontinue import of books from the enemy country for ever and to publish all such books as required by our students.
2. To replace all such books by Pakistani ones as early as possible.
3. To make regular supply of such books to the students at moderate prices.
4. To strengthen our National Defence Fund by sharing profits from these publications.

The Front solicits co-operation of the students, teachers, authors, booksellers and others concerned in this struggle against the enemy.

The Economic Front Publications.

Printed at Zarreen Art Press, Lahore

A CRITICAL PLAN

When evaluating a passage of prose or poetry a critic works to a plan, and the aim of this book is to enable you to see that plan and its purpose clearly, and to learn to work to it. We start here with a summary of the critical plan for applied criticism of both prose and poetry. In successive chapters we investigate each stage of the critical process, culminating in the complete criticism of a poem and a piece of prose in the following manner :

(*a*) The critic begins with a general statement of the theme and the tone of the poem or a passage of prose, as a whole.

(*b*) A passage under consideration may use a number of resources of communication. Thus a critic must keep in view that it is always something more than an arrangement of words in a statement.

(*c*) Then follows a detailed account of the meaning of the poem, and of the development of the poet's thoughts from the beginning to the end.

(*d*) This portion of your criticism deals with the kind of theme and the poet's purpose in writing about it.

(*e*) A piece may have a dramatic organization. We must ask on our first reading : "Who is speaking, and to whom"? Nor will we assume that the "I" of a poem is necessarily the poet or representative of the poet.

(*f*) The vacabulary of literary discussion is important to the student. We must have precise terms to think with and to use in speaking and writing about poetry and prose.

(*g*) Here is expressed a final judgment of the poem based on the evidence collected in earlier stages of the critical processes. The final judgment should leave the reader with a clear picture of the critic's reactions to the poem as piece of prose as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author acknowledges with gratitude the assistance accorded to him by the various scholars, whose works he has consulted unsparingly and quoted unhesitatingly in the pages of this book. To acknowledge this debt individually will be endless task, for the number of such authors is legion.

CONTENTS

1

APPLIED CRITICISM OF POETRY

SECTION I

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CRITICISM OF POETRY

1. Many-sided Surface : Like most things that have interested man over a long period of time, a poem presents a many-sided surface. For one thing, since it comes into being in the midst of a culture, it presents in one degree or another a mirror of the conventions, fashions, tastes, and values of the period in which it was written. When this aspect of poetry seizes the reader's attention, or when he seeks it out, he behaves as a historian. He considers the truthworthiness of the poet as a witness, he extends his inquiry into the poet's other writings, he looks into other types of documents (diaries, journals, newspapers, and other forms of art) for confirmation of his findings, and he begins to draw generalizations about the character of the age in question. This aspect of poetry has heen widely cultivated in modern times by literary critics such as Edmund Wilson and Lionel Trilling, and by cultural historians such as Spengler and Toynbee, who have often looked to art objects for essential insights into the cultures they study.

2. Outer and Inner Life : A poem may bear witness to the poet's outer and inner life—what he saw and did, what his manner of life was, what his qualities of mind and sensibility were, as well as what the structure of his personality was or even what may have been the unconscious feeling of guilt which, according to some schools of psycho-analysis, underlie dreams and poetry alike. This general line of inquiry has a long tradition, extending from Longinus in antiquity to the critical writing of such moderns as T. S. Eliot, Kenneth Burke, and Ernest Jones.

3. **Dramatic Images of Human Condition :** Since poetry represents and interprets dramatic images of the human condition, often in its most serious and abiding aspects, or puts forth ideas and doctrines, it can scarcely avoid radiating circles of influence upon the reader's thoughts and conduct. When he looks upon a poem from this point of view, he begins asking questions about the moral implications of the human action represented in the poem, the quality of the agents, and the over-arching views of the poet. He goes on to compare the breadth, complexity, and truth of the vision of life that it portrays with the visions of other poets, and he calculates its possible moral effects upon its readers. As with the other two areas of criticism, here too is found a distinguished line of critics who centre their attention upon the relationship of literature to life—Plato, Sidney, Shelley, and Arnold, to name but a few.

4. **An Independent Object :** There is yet another line of inquiry into which a poem may lead the reader. Aside from its relationship to the age, the personality of the poet, and the realm of moral and philosophical values, a poem exists in its own right as an independent object having its own form and its own intuitional relationships. It is not the product of natural laws, as are plants and animals, nor does it come into being merely because of the prevalling temper of the age or because the poet is endowed with special powers of feeling, thought and imagination. Rather, it comes into being because the poet makes it ; he applies his special powers to whatever means his mind or his period afford him all in the service of some end or organising design sufficiently distinctive to give his poem an identity of its own.

5. **A Poet and his Works :** One of the obvious clues to the special world of a poet is his way with words. As you read widely in the work of an author you begin to develop a sense of a characteristic quality of style. Inquiry at this level might well begin with an effort to define this quality. Is it more elevated than ordinary speech (as in the case of Milton) ? Or is it fastidious and exotic (as in the case of Wallace Stevens), wittily urbane (as in the case of Auden), sensuously opulent (as in the case of Keats), plain and straight-

forward (as in the case of Edwin Muir), or casual and colloquial (as in the case of Robert Frost)? After you have settled on the precise quality that distinguishes the poet's style, you might then seek out the particular device of language which combines to produce this quality. Does it lie in his choice of diction ? Some poets, for example, have a favourite set of words that carry unusual weight with them (as in the case of Dylan Thomas, whose early poems generate a special flavour through their obsessive iteration of such words as 'fork', 'fellow', 'vein,' or 'half'). Are the poet's words concrete or abstract, long or short, technical or everyday, strange or familiar, standard or regional ?

6. **Poet's Manner of Putting Words** : You ought then to consider what is contributed by the poet's manner of putting words together. Does he use the normal order of words or invert them? Is he sparing or generous with modifiers ? Does he prefer simple or complex sentences ? Does he like to construct his sentences so that phrase balances phrase and clause answers clause ? Does he withhold his meaning until the end of the sentence ? After surveying the poet's syntax you might then consider his use of comparisons. Does he rely heavily upon similes and metaphors ? If so, form what areas of experience do they derive ? Does he make use of symbolism ? Is he fond of allusion ? Does the poet have marked preferences for certain metres and stanza forms ? Does he like to work out intricate relations between the stanza structure and the evolution of thought and feeling in the poem, or is he more contact with a flexible blank verse that stamps no definite mould on the turns of thought? Such questions as these do not exhaust the stylistic devices that may contribute to the distinctive quality of a poet's style, but they should suggest the directions your inquiry might take.

7. **Poet's Choice of Material** : Another area in which a poet may reveal his characteristic bent is his choice of material. If he is primarily given to the representation of imagined characters undergoing moments of experience, you ought to consider what types of activities he prefers—states of feeling, internal processes of describing, reflecting, deliberating,

and meditating or speeches addressed to other persons in the imagined scene. What types of circumstances usually stimulate this activity—occurrences in nature (as often is the case with Frost), scenes from the city (as with Cummings), human relationship (as with Browning), personal problems of value and conduct (as often with Wordsworth)? What is the character and personality of the persons usually engaged in the experience? Here, as in almost every area of creative choice, the possibilities are endless. The characters may range from grave and lofty to flippant and irrelevant, from emotionally expansive to stoically restrained, from innocent to sophisticated, from exuberant to worldweary. Then, too, you will want to inquire what qualities of thought mark the characteristic speaker of the poems. Does he have distinctive views regarding the nature of man and the universe? The proper conduct of man? The values of experience ?

If the poet prefers to present ideas directly, relevant topics for characterizing him would include such matters as the persistent themes he employs and the way he develops them.

8. **Emotional Response :** The next point is the emotional response that the poet characteristically seeks to evoke through his ordering of language and context. Does he shape and combine elements of action and language in such a way as to elicit a distinctive shading of admiration, pity, indignation, laughter, sympathy, or surprise ? As you have already seen, it is no easy matter to define the precise nature of your emotional response to alyric experience. It is different enough to pinpoint the emotions a roused by the larger actions of a play or novel ; to catch the nuance of a fleeting mood or subtle reflection in a lyric calls for the utmost care. One of the values of reading a large number of poems by a single poet is that it will aid you in making such discriminations.

9. **A Variety of Choices :** There are a variety of choices which the poet must make in finding effective ways of unfolding his context—the choice of point of view, selection of detail, ordering of parts, the scale with which the serveral parts are to be handled, among others. Here, too, we may trace the

preference and habits that characterize a particular poet. Some poets are fond of elaborating the circumstances which give rise to the lyric activity before presenting the activity itself. Others plunge immediately into the experience of feeling or thinking and withold its causes until the end or leave them to be inferred. Some poets prefer to make the connections between one thought and another leave them to be worked out by the reader. In expository poems the poet may have characteristic ways of celebrating his subject—amplification by details, by examples, or by comparison.

10. **A Central Poetic Concern or the Poet's Vision:** Using such topics as we have just suggested, you might proceed to draw up a formidable list of persistent artistic practices running through work of a particular poet. Yet beyond mere list-making a further question beckons ; is there some central poetic concern or some pervasive view of the world engaging the artist's attention over a period of time which explains his predilection for certain poetic contexts, certain lyric utterances are exclamatory, marked by the strong but irregular rhythms of passionate speech, and intensified by heavy alliteration, internal rhyme, and onomatopoetic effects. And most characteristic of all, his impatient urgency pauses him to jam nouns together without the connectives that normally accompany deliberate speech.

It takes patience, devoted reading, and many a tentative speculation to sift the works of a poet for his characteristic vein and to perceive the connections between his susceptibilities, preoccupations, assumptions, and his persistent poetic practices. Unity, however, should not be enforced for its own sake. It is always important to remember that a poet may have more than one poetic vein, that he may work in a variety of modes. Indeed, it is a useful to distinguish between poets who have but one voice and those who have many. It is also important to remember that a poet may undergo development during his artistic career. Wiliam Butler Yeats's for example, began as a romantic poet aiming at nebulous and tenuous effects, but in mid-career he began to sense the powers of plainness and directness in poetry. Thus, in seeking

the poet's vision, you will do well to keep in mind the possibility of diversity.

It may have occurred to you by now that the effort to define a poet's vision can be an interesting inquiry in its own right. To grow familiar with the particular quality of an artist's imagination, to observe the range of his interests, and to trace out how his imagination forms, certain techniques of representation, and certain devices of diction? This notion of a central poetic concern—what we have called the poet's vision—might be understood if we think of a poet as having a particular susceptibility to certain kinds of experience, or a preoccupation with certain moral or intellectual problems, or a reliance upon certain assumptions about life. These susceptibilities, preoccupation, or assumptions are about life. These susceptibilities, preoccupations may operate at moments of inspiration in influencing the many choices that creative writing requires.

The poetic vein that seems to nourish much of Hopkins's poetry, for example, is his susceptibility to moments of intense religious feeling—a feeling that ranges from a fervent joy and wonder at manifestations in nature of "God's grandeur"—a kestrel riding the air, a kingfisher in a flashing dive, or a fresh spring day to agonizing despair when he feels no longer sustained by God's grace. His interest in such manifestations is influenced by his theological assumption that each thing has its own peculiar essence and that when that essence is expressed in the proper functioning of the object or living being, God's glory is most fully revealed. But whether he feels in or out of a state of grace, Hopkins tends to write lyric portraying intense movements of passion. Consequently his poems begins at a fever pitch, elaborate a single burst of thought or feeling, and are soon done (the sonnet provides his favourite stanza pattern). His and his interests are bodied forth in his art are always of increasing your awareness of human possibilities. But more important, an understanding of the poet's vision allows you to return to his poems as a better reader and critic. Having learnt to recognize his special habits of language, his favourite contexts, and his

preferred techniques for disclosing his subject, you will be that much more adept at coming to artistic terms with any one of his poems; and, having surveyed the range of his work, you will be that much more able to see how that poem was, perhaps, a tentative experiment, or that it achieved a triumphat solution to a persistent problem, or that it merely repeated earlier efforts, or that it marked a turning point in his career.

11. **Influence of Time on Poet's Creative Work :**—A consideration of the poetic conventions that influenced the writing of many poets in a given time and place is a necessary correct to your initial estimate of an individual poet, for without it you may mistakenly assign to personal vision what in reality belongs to the age. As you widen your reading of the poetry of a period, you will become aware of a variety of conventions.

In some periods, the diction that is felt suitable to poetry of various kinds is strongly fixed : whereas at other times, the poet is free to experiment in a wide range of styles. In some periods, metaphor and symbol may be the height of fashion; in others, poetic distinction may be sought in the rhetorical figures of balance, parallelism, or antithesis.

Periods may also be characterized by the popularity of certain poetic forms. For example, during the eighteenth century in England rhetorical poetry, which aimed at either praise or ridicule, was much in vogue, whereas in the early nineteenth century, lyrics of emotion and meditation became more prominent.

You will also find conventions of thought and attitude permeating the poetry of a given time and place. Elizabethan love poetry, for example, draws heavily upon the tradition of courtly love, a complex of conventions stemming from the late Middle Ages which prescribed the proper emotions between the high-born lady and her devoted knight, the duties of each, the language appropriate to their discourse. In the eighteenth century the concept of the Great Chain of Being provided an important framework for the discursive poetry

of the period. In the twentieth century, to cite one final example, the mythology of Greece and of more primitive cultures became fashionable in literary art under the influence of such men as Frazer and Jung, who theorized that myths embody the fundamental patterns of human existence. As you can see, the topics for guiding an inquiry into the conventions of a period are similar to those we recommended for examining the poems of an individual poetic forms, and vision.

After establishing the various conventions that characterize a period you may ask whether it is possible to go on, as we did in the case of the poet's vision, to work out a synthesis for the age. One school of historians would say 'yes,' we would urge the utmost caution in such an endeavour. It is true that the poets of a given period may reveal a preoccupation with a common problem (for example, the conflict of religion and science, or the role of the poet in a materialistic society, or the problem of personal entity), but is not likely that they all conceive of the problem in the same terms or that they find the same solutions in the same way. The diversity of temperaments, values and of views of life that we see around us in our own time should recommend to us a sceptical attitude toward such popular unifying rubrics as the Age of Reason, the Age of Romanticism, or the Age of Anxiety.

But it goes without saying that a widening knowledge of the poetic conventions of a period adds greatly to your ability to deal with the qualities, of a single author and even more important with his individual poems. It will help you to determine how far a given poem is dependent on conventions —whether the poem merely imitates conventions, whether it turns them to new artistic uses, or whether it ignores them altogether. Moreover, it will sometimes help to explain those choices of the poet which do not seem to be specifically determined by his artistic purpose. There is nothing in the art of writing a love poem, for example, which demands that it be in a sonnet pattern ; thus to understand Shakespeare's choice of the pattern in his cycle of love poems, we must look to the sonnet in vogue in Elizabethan England.

12. **Changing Characteristics of the Poetic Art from Period to Period** : Here the aim is to acquire a sense of the changing characteristics of the poetic art from period to period. To trace the intricate lines of development in the lyric and to uncover the causes of change are undoubtedly the tasks of mature scholarship, but even the amateur may add zest to his reading by beginning his own list of observations regarding the evolution of conventions. One of the interesting experiments that may be carried out while you are reading through a poetry-anthology is to take as a constant one of the topics and then ask what changes take place in that area from age to age. For example, you may take a certain poetic form—say, the serious meditative of deliberative lyric which concludes with an important solution or choice for the speaker (perhaps Milton's "Lycidas," Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn," Arnold's "Dover Beach," and Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium"). Then you might note what changes occur from period to period in the diction employed with the form, the types of situations that provoke the response, the premises that are involved in the solution or choice, the types of characters engaged in the experience, the nature of the conclusion, the devices of representation employed, and so on. Or you may hold a certain subject-matter constant (say, death, war, childhood, nature, or feminine beauty) and consider what variations it undergoes over a period of time. In what poetic forms does it appear ? What images are associated wit it ? Is it treated lightly or seriously ? Or you may hold certain conventions constant, such as the convention of the pastoral poem or the ode, and observe the variations it undergoes from generation to generation. Or you may trace the changes in poetic diction over a period of time, as Josephine Miles has done in her detailed studies of poetic language. Experiments of this kind are limited only by your curiosity and ingenuity, but they should all be aimed at refining your sense of what characterizes each age and at locating the sequence by which changes came about.

These, then, are some of the broad and far-reaching avenues that lead out from the study of single poems. To grow intimate with the ways of an individual poet, to savour his

distinctive qualities in the setting of his own time, to glimpse art of a given culture—these are all pleasurable exercises of the mind in their own right, but it should be remembered that their greatest value is that they bring you back to the individual poem with strengthened powers of discrimination and enjoyment.

(Norman Friedman and McLaughlin)

SECTION 2

WHAT IS POETRY ?

For as far back as history records man has tried to tell, in some form or other, of his experiences, not only in the field of endeavour and achievement but in that of the emotions love, hate, hope and despair, triumph and regret, sorrow and joy. These records of human experience have taken many diverse forms, and the various arts, music, painting, sculpture, literature, and the rest, bear witness to that diversity ; but, whatever form the record takes, it reveals a desire to pass on to the future the deeds and thoughts of the present. Of course, it is only in relatively few cases that this desire has come to fruition. Much the greater part of art is short-lived. It may fail to attract attention at all. It may attract and hold attention for a brief time. It may persist for a generation or two, and then fade from the minds of men.

Some art, however, for reasons that have never been, and possibly never will be, adequately explained, seems to bear within it the power to persist, some mysterious seed of immortality. It would almost seem as though there is a kind of language within language, a power of appealing to, and being understood by, men of many generations and of many races. As with art in general, so with literature, and in particular with poetry.

The search for this mysterious power, this inner and secret language, is a search that will not be fully successful, but, though it may not reveal the secret, it will open up so many ways of understanding, and so many avenues of enjoyment, that it will prove well worth undertaking for its own sake.

Our inquiry will be then directed, not to find out that mysterious secret which has eluded the grasp of so many, but

to find out those secrets which can to some extent be grasped, and the discovery of which will throw some light, at any rate, on the study of literature.

We shall consider poetry only because it is in poetry that the supreme literary artists of almost every age and every race have expressed themselves. What is poetry ? No answer to this question has ever met with universal approval. The following judgments are to be considered, not as definitions, or even universally accepted criteria, but rather as starting-points for our own inquiries :

1. Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature.
   —*Dr. Samuel Johnson*

2. It is important to hold fast to this : that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life ; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life. —*Matthew Arnold*

3. The grand power of poetry is its interpretative power —the power of so dealing with things as to awaken in us a wonderfully full, new, and intimate sense of them, and of our ralations with them.
   —*Matthew Arnold*

4. The end of poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure.
   —*William Wordsworth*

5. All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. —*William Wordsworth*

6. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge ; it is the impassioned expression which is the countenance of all Science. —*William Wrodsworth*

7. A poet in our times is a semi-barbarian in a civilized community. —*T. L. Peacock*

8. Poetry was the mental rattle that awakened the attention of intellect in the infancy of civil society.
   —*T. L. Peacock*

9. Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be 'the expression of the imagination': and poetry is connected with the origin of man. —*P. B. Shelley*

10. A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. —*P. B. Shelley*

11. In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart,
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

—*William Wordsworth*

12. Poets are the trumpets that sing to battle, they are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

—*P. B. Shelley*

13. Poetry is life seen through a temperament. —*Ignotu*

14. Poetry is everything ; it can define the indefinable ; it can embrace the illimitable ; it can speak the ineffable ; it can penetrate the abyss ; it can measure eternity. —*Gabriele D'Annunzio*

15. Poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity.

—*William Wordsworth*

16. Poetry should be brief, passionate, intense.
—*Edgar Allan Poe*

17. The poet is a man who has a greater knowledge of human nature and a more comprehensive soul than are supposed to be common among mankind.

—*William Wordsworth*

18. There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only poets know.

—*William Cowper*

19. Primarily poetry is an exploration of the possibilities of language. It does not aim directly at consolation or moral exhortation ; nor at the expression of exquisite moments, but at an extension of significance ; and it might be argued that a too self-conscious concern with 'contemporary' problems deflects the poet's efforts from his true objective. —*Michael Roberts*

20. I would say that the poet may write about anything provided that that thing matters to him to start with for then it will bring with it into the poem the intellectual or moral significance which it has for him in life. —*Louis Macneice*

21. A Poet!—He hath put his heart to school,
Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff
Which Art hath lodged within his hand—must laugh
By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
Thy Art be Nature ; live current quaff.
— *William Wordsworth*

22. Poetry means the best words in the best order.
—*S. T. Coleridge*

23. What is poetry? The suggestion, by the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions.
—*John Ruskin*

24. No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same a profound philosopher. —*S. T. Coleridge*

25. The business of a poet, said Imlac, is to examine, not the individual, but the species ;...he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest.
—*Samuel Johnson*

It would seem from the foregoing quotations that poets and critics, and especially poet-critics, differ considerably among themselves, not merely about what constitutes poetry but about what sort of person the poet is, and what is, and even should be, his attitude to poetry.

Thus Dr. Johnson dwells upon the representative nature of poetry. Poetry, he considers, should be an accurate reflection of human life and experience, that is, of general experience. Matthew Arnold inclines to the same view, though he emphasizes points that Dr. Johnson ignores. Arnold stresses the potency and beauty of the poet's work, its power to stir us strongly and deeply. T. L. Peacock argues that poetry is an activity of primitive man, and that its survival is merely a continuation of primitive elements into modern life. William Wordsworth claims that poetry at its best is the spontaneous reaction of the poet to the common experiences of life, though elsewhere he implies that there is often a considerable time-lag between the experiences and the 'spontaneous' reaction. To P. B. Shelley a poet would almost seem to be a prophet and a revolutionary, leading the vanguard in man's thrust towards enlightenment and emancipation. A modern poet, Michael Roberts, finds in the emotive use of language the most natural function of the poet; another, Louis Macneice, sees in the poet's sincerity, his preoccupation with those experiences in life which affect him most strongly, his true dynamic. Theophile Gautier, a French Romantic poet, stresses less the matter than the manner of poetry. The poet is to him an artist working with words, fashioning out of the rude and stubborn mass of personal experience a timeless monument.

SECTION 3

PLEASURES OF POETRY

(*i*) **Poetry affords opportunity for pleasurable recognition :** In the first place, poetry gives us the pleasure of recognition. That is, in a way, a proof that it is widely read. We all flush with involuntary pleasure when we hear an allusion to Joce Kilmer's 'Trees' or to Alan Seeger's 'I Have a Rendezvous with Death,' because we know about them.

(*ii*) **Poetry appeals to the imagination :** But the feeling of pleasurable recognition is only a minor reason for our enjoyment of poetry. When we read in a novel that the heroine, as she looked out into the moonlit winter night, quoted softly to herself:

> Deep on the convent-roof the snows
> Are sparkling to the moon,

it does give us pleasure if we recognize the poem; but it gives us pleasure even if we do not. The reason is not far to seek. Poetry stimulates the imagination. It enables us to see in our imagination the beauty of the snow 'sparkling to the moon' and to feel the old stillness of the winter night. It recreates for us the beauty of 'October's Bright Blue Weather':

> When on the ground red apples lie
> In piles like jewels shining,
> And redder still on old stone walls
> Are leaves of woodbine twining.

In the dead of winter 'The Vision of Sir Launfal' carries us back to June when

> The cowslip startles in meadows green, and
> The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice.

There is no wonderland to which poetry cannot take us through the imagination, whether it be deep under the sea in

> Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep
> Where the winds are all asleep ;
> Where the spent lights quiver and gleam !
> Where the salt weed sways in the stream

or in that ideal land of

> Magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Poetry takes us back into the Middle Ages with Keats in 'The Eve of St. Agnes' or leaves us

> Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide, wide sea

with the Ancient Mariner. It transports us to a snowbound New England homestead,

> Content to let the north-wind roar
> In baffled rage at pane and door,

with Whittier, or brings us once more to the time when

> A boy's will is the wind's will,
> And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.

Small wonder, then, that poetry is universally read. Through its appeal to the imagination it offers us the surest escape from the stern reality of facts.

(*iii*) **Appreciation of great poetry comes gradually :** Of course the inexperienced reader need not expect to get an emotional reaction from all great poetry as soon as he reads. There are certain stages along this journey toward appreciation of imaginative beauty, and it is far better to begin with spontaneous enjoyment of Longfellow, Lowell, and Whittier than to give up poetry in disgust just because one can see nothing in 'Lycidas', 'Comus', 'Prometheus Unbound', or 'Saul'. If you have never cared much for poetry, why not begin

(*v*) **Poetry intensifies enjoyment of common experiences :** At other times, human sympathy is so direct and artless that it meets with immediate and universal human response. That is why most of us understand at once the feeling of Rupert Brooke's 'The Great Lover' :

> These I have loved :
> White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
> Ringed with blue lines ; and feathery, faery dust ;
> Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light ; the strong crust
> Of friendly bread ; and many-fasting food ;
> Rainbows ; and the blue bitter smoke of wood ;
> And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers ;
> And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,
> Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon :
> Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon
> Smooth away trouble ; and the rough male kiss
> Of blankets ; grainy wood ; live hair that is
> Shining and free ; blue-massing clouds ; the keen
> Unpassioned beauty of a great machine ;
> The benison of hot water ; furs to touch ;
> Voices in laughter, too ; and body's pain,
> Soon turned to peace ; and the deep-panting train ;
> Firm sands ; the little dulling edge of foam
> That drowns and dwindles as the wave goes home ;
> And washen stones, gay for an hour ; the cold
> Gravenness of iron ; moist black earthen mold ;
> Steep ; and high places ; footprints in the dew ;
> And oaks ; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new ;
> And new-peeled sticks ; and shining pools on grass—
> All these have been my loves.

All these are very simple poems about simple experiences, and yet they have given a great deal of pleasure to many people, a pleasure which you, too, can easily share.

(*vi*) **Poetry stirs the imagination :** But when the poet's imagination leaves this earth and goes soaring with Shelley among skylarks and clouds and west winds, or drifting with

Keats far back into the past when a Grecian urn was new, the inexperienced reader is apt to become uneasy. In reading Keats, he wants to know exactly who this 'Belle Dame Sans Merci' is, and why Keats should yearn to 'fade far away dissolve, and quite forget,' or be 'half in love with easeful Death' just because he has heard a nightingale that

In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

Walter De la Mare, also, piques such a reader. He cannot help being interested, perhaps exasperated, by 'The Listeners'; but he wants to know who this traveller is who is knocking on the moonlit door as his horse champs the grasses of the forest. And who are these listeners who stand :

...listening in the quiet of the moonlight
...thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call ?
And why, if
...they heard his foot on the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone

—why didn't they reply ? In short, what does the poem mean ?

(*vii*) **Poetry should not be taken too literally :** Now it is really too bad that all people cannot enjoy poetry once it gets beyond the range of one's intimate experience with 'familiar matter of today that has been and may be again'. But one must be something of a poet himself to enjoy the very best in poetry. One must develop within himself something of the poet's sensitiveness to men and Nature and to the unseen, but not unreal, world of spirit. One's imagination must be able to soar away from the literal if one is to enjoy Spenser, Milton, Blake, Shelley, Keats, Francis, Thompson, De la Mare. If one has or cultivates that type of imagination, one's joy in reading poetry is as satisfying and as incom-

municable as religious ecstasy. For the sensitive reader there is a deep and mournful pathos in lines like the following four excerpts from Shakespeare, which probably would have moved thousands of devotes of Edgar Guest. But such lines are touchstones. Try them and see if you, too, feel their poetry :

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past.

Or

Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
When thou ow'dst yesterday.

Or

I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave,
I grave ? O, no ! a lantern, slaughter'd youth,
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
This vault a feasting presence full of light.

Or

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
  Nor the furious winter's rages ;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
  Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages :
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

(*viii*) **Poetry goes deep into human experience** : Naturally, the more deeply the poet's thought and feeling penetrate into life, the more deeply will the reader have to think and feel if he is to understand and sympathize. Shakespeare has passages in his sonnets and in his greatest plays that can be appreciated only after some experiences with life.

The four preceding passages from Shakespeare all require thought to be understood, experience to be felt. They illustrate perfectly that it is perhaps through poetry that we gain our profoundest appreciation of life. There is scarcely a feeling of which man is capable that does not find expression in some great poem, for the poet recreates for us, not only a picture or a sensation but also the feeling that goes with it. His expression of these things in words gives us keen pleasure. Thus it is that poetry helps us to understand and sympathize. The poet is keenly sensitive, not only to the claims of beauty but also to the claims of human sympathy. Through sympathy, he has gained understanding. Broad human sympathy is best exemplified in the works of the greatest poets like Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Browning, who deal primarily with human beings, but it is not confined to those three.

It sometimes is hard for us to understand quite all that a poet wants us to see and feel, but a genuine feeling for poetry, once aroused, grows with the growth of the reader's mind and spirit. Because poetry appeals to our sense of beauty, because it expresses what we feel and cannot ourselves express, and because it helps us to understand and sympathize with life, it makes our lives richer. If you wish to test this statement, read again any great poem with which you have been familiar since childhood, and notice how much unconscious pleasure, appreciation, and undestanding have been added to your life because of it. Any simple lyric like 'Sweet and Low' or 'Crossing the Bar' or even something from *A Child's Garden of Verses* will afford you convenient proof. Such poems are in themselves answers to the question, 'Why read poetry' ? Poetry offers pleasure to all, but of course like all other arts, it offers the most to those who have the most imagination, sympathy, and sensitiveness to give to its appreciation.

To sum up : One enjoys poetry because it stimulates the imagination, increases appreciation of nature and human experiences, arouses a feeling for beauty, and quickens the sense of kinship with our fellow-men. But appreciation of the best poetry comes gradually and grows with the growth of capacity to see and feel and understand. (Adapted)

SECTION 4

KINDS OF POETRY

In view of the varied principles on which it is possible to classify poetic compositions it is safer for our purpose to adopt that which is most in vogue, *viz*, the one which divides poetry into three great classes : Lyrical, Narrative, and Dramatic. It is however, necessary to observe, at the very outset that this division cannot be made with any great precision, for, as we shall see, in practically every narrative poem of any recognised merit we have a good deal of the dramatic and the lyrical elements, and, similarly, narration and song cannot be entirely excluded from dramatic poetry. These kinds of poetry represent three distinct kinds of poetic activity.

The Subjective *versus* **the Objective Poet :** The various kinds of poetry enable us to differentiate between the subjective and the objective poet. "Lyric writer is spoken of as the Subjective or Personal Poet. A poet is called subjective when he finds inspiration for his work in his own thoughts, emotions, imagination and experiences, and gives expression to his own personal feelings or impulses. When a poet describes the actions, sentiments, and experiences of his fellow men and not his own, without any reference to his own views or feelings, he is regarded as an objective or impersonal artist. The subjective writer dives within himself, he steeps his theme in his individuality and sensations : the objective artist looks outside himself and treats his facts, scenes, characters, and situations, whether observed or imaginary, without drawing attention to his own comotions, reflections or personality. Thus, the *Sonnets* of Shakespeare or Milton are subjective, because in them we can trace their authors' sensations and views, but Homer's *Iliad* is objective, because it merely describes external facts, persons, and events, whether historical or imaginary, and scarcely makes any revelation of the author's self. Narrative poetry is, as a rule, objective, as we shall see later on. We have tried to distinguish between the subjective

and the objective kind of poetry, but, here again, it is necessary to put up a cautionary signal ; it is impossible to draw a sharp line between the two kinds, because, however impersonal the theme of the poet may be, he cannot entirely eliminate himself from his work.

LYRIC POETRY

What, then, is a lyric ? The dictionary defines 'lyric' as 'of or pertaining to the lyric ; meant to be sung...Now the name for short poems, usually divided into stanzas or strophes, and directly expressing the poet's own thoughts and sentiments'. This definition shows how impossible it is to define the lyric. For instance, it can be argued that *all* poems except dramatic ones, express 'the poet's own thoughts and sentiments', and on the other hand that the lyric by no means always does so 'directly' : can we say that 'Full fathom five' or 'O sunflower weary of time' is a *direct* expression of the poet's thoughts and sentiments? Perhaps 'immediate' would be a better word. A lyric can indeed convey states of mind immediately - that is, without apparent context without argument, without comment by the poet. But this leads us into another difficulty, for many such lyrics cannot accurately be called expressions of the *poet's own* states of mind : they are pure, or they are impersonal. Pure Poetry, in Mallarme's sense of a poetry which aspires to the conditions of music, is rare in English : we find it, or something near to it, in certain of Shakespeare's songs, possibly in *Kubla Khan*, in a few poems by Beddoes and Christina Rossetti, in Dobell's *The Orphan's Song*, in the nonsense verse of Lear and Carroll—poems from which prose meaning, rational sequence, the tendency of language to communicate through intellectual concepts, have all been excluded. Such poems either do not convey the poet's state of mind at all, or express it in so oblique and rarefied a way as to render it unimportant for the reader. What is excluded in the impersonal poem is not prose meaning and rational sequence but the poet's human individuality. The Japanese *haiku*, the poems of the Imagists, much medieval English lyric—the carols, for example—are of this nature : we can gather from them little or nothing about the personality of their writers : whether they have

Anapaestic rhythm, too regularly used, gives a mechanical and tedious effect, as witness Byron's *The Destruction of Sennacherib*, or certain of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* and Swinburne's poems. But a more tactful handling of the anapaest, varying it with the iamb, can produce a beautifully flexible lyrical rhythm—the dancing tilt we get in many of Browning and Hardy's shorter poems.

Finally, there is the test of language. Here we are on much more debatable ground. It is not difficult to recognise lyrical rhythms, or the transparency and single-mindedness of the lyric : but is there such a thing as lyrical language, and if so, how do we identify it? Suppose I take a line from a poem unknown to a given reader, and ask him to tell me, on the strength of this sample, whether the poem it comes from is a lyric. For example,

Lo ! what a mariner love hath made me !

It could come from a play, or from a dramatic monologue. In fact, it is from a poem by Surrey which we should call a lyrical poem. It is wrong, of course, to base any final judgements on isolated lines : we must consider the language of each poem as a whole, in relation with the poem's rhythms and the purity or simplicity of the state of mind it is expressing. Also it would be ridiculous to suggest that there is only one kind of lyrical language : for instance, poets have managed to move far from the lyric's source in song and write poems in a colloquial language which nevertheless does not disqualify them as lyrics. Yet, although I can offer no all-embracing definition of lyrical language, I seem to be able to recognise this way of saying things when I meet it—and in lines so far removed from each other in time and subject and intensity as Drummond's 'A hyacinth I wished me in her hand' and Heber's 'By Coll siloam's Shady rill'.

The most notable line of development in English lyrical verse can be a traced in its power to deal seriously with a widening range of subject-matter, while preserving its lyrical character. Shakespeare in his sonnets, Donne in his love poems, explored far more deeply into the meanings of ex-

perience than any of their lyric predecessors. But their deployment of thought and syntactical patterns were generally too complex for these poems to come properly within my definition of the lyric. Seriousness, depth and resonance of meaning, allied to the authentic lyrical utterance as I hear it, appear most signally in Wyatt, in Shakespeare's songs, in Marvell, in Blake's *Song of Experience*, Wordsworth's Lucy Poems, a few of Emily Bronte's, and more than few by Hardy and Yeats.

The lyric line appears to have considerable gaps. For instance, there was little good lyric writing between the end of the 17th century and the Romantics. But the 18th century was the great age of hymn-writing ; moreover Charles Wesley, Isaac Watts and other hymn-writers took over for their own purpose the four-square metre which had been so commonly used in cynical or lascivious songs by Restoration lyricists—anticipating, no doubt, the Salvation Army's sturdy refusal to let the Devil have all the best tunes. Again, the early 17th century for most of us means the Metaphysical poets, whose work is indeed one of the greater glories of English poetry. But its value was little recognised in their own time, and this kind of poetic thinking had too elaborate a dialectic for the lyrical mode-lyrics do not argue. We must remember, though, that while Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw and other followers of Donne were writing, there were also lyrical poets at work, who were sometimes influenced by the great Metaphysicals and now seem overshadowed by them : Carew, Waller, Davenant, Suckling, Lovelace, for example, wrote lyrics the best of which have outlived their day.

The verse of the Cavalier poets and the Restoration lyricists may not much appeal to modern readers, who took for irony, tough thinking, sincerity, a roughened surface. These poets, with their smoothness, their rather facile paradoxes and antitheses, their apparent frivolity of attitude, must evidently be rated as minor writers. But we are ourselves disposed to reject lyrics which are technically so accomplished, which run easily, and display such verve, urbanity, or high

spirits as those of Dryden, Rochester, Sedley, Gay. 'Poetry does not have to be great or even serious to be good', said W. H. Auden in his inaugural lecture of Oxford.

Anyone who has to work his way through the mass of minor verse produced in the 19th century may well regret the loss of that urbane poise and gaiety we find in Restoration lyrics. Pope and his followers made little use of the lyric form : the Romantics used it for serious purpose. We can see the break most easily in Hood, who wrote some excellent lyrics but kept his lighter side for facetious, punning verse, and never the twain did meet. We have no Victorian writer, except Clough in a few passages of *Amours de Voyage*, who manages to be at once lyrical and amusing. The great Romantics certainly enlarged the scope of the lyric, as they enlarged human sensibility : very few earlier lyrics have the resonance of Wordsworth's 'A slumber did my spirit seal', or even of Keats's 'In a drear-nighted December'. But the spiritual pressure behind their finest lyrics was never equalled by their immediate successors. With the Victorians, the Romantic seriousness dwindled into solemnity and all too often into mawkishness. The Victorians did, however, extend the lyric in two directions : the detailed observation of nature—we get this from Tennyson, and Browning, from Patmore, D. G. Rossetti and Meredith, above all from Hopkins ; and the lyrical treatment of human relationships on more intimately personal lines than poets had cared to attempt before.

VARIOUS KINDS OF LYRIC POETRY

Lyric poetry takes various forms, according to the nature of the emotion which inspires it. The various forms of lyric can be differentiated by the matter and the treatment in which that feeling is expressed. The following are the chief forms of the lyric :

(*i*) **The Lyrics of Religious Emotion, or Hymns :** These are the outpourings of the poet's soul not towards man

but towards God and the supernatural. To this class belong the *Psalms of David* which exibit to us this species of lyric poetry in its highest manifestation. The *Hymns of the Rig-Veda* also belong to this class.

(*ii*) **Patriotic Songs :** Akin to religious lyrics are patriotic or heroic songs. In these are sung the praises of national heroes, their warlike exploits and other great achievements, or the glory of one's native land. National songs are to be found among all peoples. A patriotic song may breathe the spirit not of the author alone but of an entire nation, as in the case of the French national authem, *The Marseillaise*, or the Indian *Vande Mataram*, Campbell's *Ye Mariners of England*, Walter Scott's *Breathes there the man with soul so dead*, Moore's *Pro Partia Mori*, W. E. Henley's *England* and Kipling's *The Children's Song* are some of the best-known patriotic poems. Sublimity, elevation and sincerity must characterise both sacred and patriotic lyrics.

(*iii*) **Love Lyrics :** These are the outpourings of the sentiments of love, its bliss and tragedy, its joys, its hopes, and its disappointments. The lyrics so inspired are very numerous, and every literature, particularly, perhaps, English literature, is rich in them. We have a whole array of them in Francis Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury*. The Elizabethan Age of English literature was specially prolific in this respect, as in the works of Spenser (*Epithalamion*), Marlowe (*Come live with me and be my love*), Jonson (*Drink to me only with thine eyes*), and Shakespeare (*Take, O take lips away*), to mention no more.

(*iv*) **Elegies :** Elegy is derived from a Greek word for a song of mourning or a lament : it is a mournful or a plaintive lyric. *Lucy's Death* in Wordsworth, Byron's *Thyrza*, Cowper's *Loss of the Royal George* are examples of lyrical elegies, Shelley's *Adonais* and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, though elegies are philosophical in their mood and long-drawn out in their treatment. Milton's *Lycidas* and Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis* are spoken of as pastoral elegies because the mourners over the dead are represented as shepherds, the scene is laid amidst rural surroundings, and the other details

and machinery of the poems are made to accord with the fiction of shepherds lamenting over the death of one of themselves.

(*v*) **The Sonnet :** The sonnet is a short poem limited to fourteen lines with a definite rhyme arrangement. The sonnet is of Italian origin, and Petrarch was the first great Italian sonneteer. This form of verse was introduced into England a little before the reign of Queen Elizabeth. In her reign there was a lively interest in sonnet writing, and some of the best sonnets in the English language are from the pen of Shakespeare. In the succeeding age Milton wrote very inspiring and perfectly modelled sonnets. In the Restoration age this form of verse was almost neglected. The sonnet reappeared with the advent of Wordsworth, Byron, Keats and others of the Romantic Revival, and even at the present day it is a form which finds much favour with poets and the public.

The sonnet is, as we have said, a rhymed poem limited to fourteen lines ; each line is, as a rule, of five iambic feet. The fourteen lines are broken up into sets, a group of eight, called the octave, and a group of six, called the sestet. Sometimes, instead of eight continuous lines, we have two stanzas of four lines each or two quatrains, and, similarly, instead of one verse of six lines we have two of three lines each or two tercets. The rhyming arrangement is as follows : in the octave *a, b, b, a, a, b, b, a,* and in the sestet *c, d, c, d, c, d,* or *c, d, e, c, d, e.*

NARRATIVE POETRY

Narrative poems are so called because their principal function is to narrate what has actually happened, *i.e.*, historical incidents, or what men believe to have happened *i.e.*, myths and legends. Unlike lyrical poetry such verse does present the feelings of the writer or his individual experiences or his thoughts, because he does not invent his facts. Narrative verse is entirely impersonal, except for the element of personality which the poet can convey to it by his style and his treatment of theme.

The following are the main types of the narrative poetry :

(*i*) **Ballad :** A narrative poem, usually simple and fairly short, originally designed to be sung. Ballads often begin abruptly, the previous action, utilizing simple language, tell the story tersely through dialogue and described action, and make use of refrains. The folk ballads, which reached its height in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was composed anonymously and handed down orally, often in several different versions. The literary ballad, consciously created by a poet in imitation of the folk ballad, makes use of many of its devices and conventions. Coleridge's *Rhime of the Ancient Mariner*, Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, and Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol* are all literary ballads.

The chief quality of the genuine old ballads is their simplicity and their artlessness—plainness of thought, plainness of diction and, within their compass, nobility. In a ballad no moral is drawn, no analysis of feeling attempted, no detailed ornament introduced. It appeals by its rapidity of rhythm, its plainness of thought and diction and its inherent feeling of nobility.

(*ii*) **Epic :** These conventions, only some of which can be mentioned here, are followed by writers of epic with varying degrees of strictness. The poet begins by announcing his theme, invoking the aid of a muse, and asking her an epic question, with the reply to which the story begins. He then launches his action in *medias res*, in the middle of things. This action concerns a hero, a man of stature and significance ; Odysseus, for example, is king of Ithaca, and Aeneas is the founder of the Roman Empire. In the course of the story, the hero performs many notable deeds, one of which is to descend into the under-world. The major characters are catalogued and described, many of them having dignified set speeches which reveal their characters. There are usually great battles in which the gods themselves, who are regularly involved in epic stories, take part. Finally, the epic poet adopts a style, dignified, elaborate and exalted, suitable to his theme.

Just as in the case of ballad we have the primitive and

the literary ballads, so similarly in the case of the epic we have the early epics which, like the *Mahabharata* and the *Iliad*, were handed down during successive generations by word of mouth wonderful feats of memory—and the later written epics like Dante's *The Divine Comedy* or Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The former are spoken of as the 'epics of growth', because it is believed that the small, separate, independent songs, celebrating single exploits of their heroes, were gradually put together to form the epic poem, which is not, therefore, in its entirety, the work of any one single author. Thus, it is held by some critics that the *Iliad* is a collection of lays or ballads, originally short, that were pieced together at a later date by some man of genius whose name may have been Homer. The epic of art or the literary epic, on the other hand, is the work of one single author.

The following are the basic characteristics of the epic, whether it is primitive or literary :—

(*a*) An epic is a narrative poem.

(*b*) It is supposed to have a divine inspiration.

(*c*) It deals with a subject of great and momentous importance to mankind.

(*d*) The characters of the story are partly human and partly divine.

(*e*) An epic poem must contain some one personage, distinguished above all the rest, who is regarded as the hero of the tale. When there is one principal figure who is the centre of the various activities and enterprises, the unity of the action or plot is rendered more perceptible.

(*f*) The epic action must have a beginning, a middle and an end, and to ensure this the author must either relate the whole story in his own person, or introduce some of his characters who will narrate to us the events that precede the opening of the poem. He must satisfy our curiosity in every detail. Thus, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Satan tells us at the very beginning of the poem, in the First

> Book, the reason why he and his companions are following in a burning lake in Hell. There is no time limit to the duration of the action of an epic. The action of *Paradise Lost* extends to whole ages. It is not essential that an epic should end successfully, *i.e.*, with the victory of the hero, but it usually does for an unhappy conclusion would have the effect of depressing the mind rather than a stimulating or elevating it.

Paradise Lost is a great epic of English literature which satisfies the requirements of definition given above. Firstly, *Paradise Lost* is a narrative poem : it narrates the scriptural story of the creation of man, his temptation and fall, and his expulsion from Eden. There are many elements in the story, as told by Milton, which either do not agree with, or are in the nature of additions to the Biblical account ; these divergencies give scope for the exercise of the poet's individuality, which, as we have said before, need not be entirely eliminated even in a narrative poem. Secondly, the real author of the epic is supposed to be the Holy Ghost, whose mouthpiece is the author. In the opening lines of *Paradise Lost* which, in the language of criticism, are known as the 'Invocation', Milton invokes the Heavenly Muse, which is another name for the Divine Spirit, to sing

> 'Of Man's first disodedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose normal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe'.

Thirdly the subject-matter of the epic, *viz.* the fall of Man and his subsequent redemption by Christ is of stupendous import and significance for mankind. Lastly, besides Adam and Eve, the first human beings on our Earth, there are the three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, introduced into the poem, not to speak of the supernatural agency of good and evil spirit that play such an important part in the development of the story.

(*iii*) **Mock Epic :** If a long narrative poem should satisfy all the tests of epic poetry, but if the subject which it celebrates be of a trivial nature, like the cutting off of a

lock of a woman's hair, which is the story that is related in Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, then such a poem is called a Mock Epic. In a mock epic the poem is supposed to be the inspiration of a Muse, the characters are partly human and partly divine, and the language is stilted and grandiose, but the subject is of a very frivolous and unimportant character.

(*iv*) **Allegory, Parable, Fable, Myth** : Allegory is an extended narrative which carries a second meaning along with its surface story. Generally, the characters in an allegory do not have individual psychologies but are incarnation of abstract ideas and may bear such names as Lechery, Pride, Meekness etc. An allegory may be prose narrative, such as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, a poem, such as Spenser's *Faerie Queene* or a play, such as *Everyman*.

Allegory is classified into three categories. Firstly, it is religious. *Pilgrim's Progress* is the greatest example in prose form of the religious or spiritual allegory. It tells us of the journey of Christian, the pilgrim, from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. The journey of Christian is an allegory of the experiences of the soul of a converted sinner going from darkness to light, from death to immortality. Dryden's *The Hind and the Partner* is an example of a poetic allegory of religious disputes. Secondly, allegory is political. Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* is an example of political allegory in verse. In this poem the poet gives an account of the critical state of affairs in England in his own day under the guise of a story taken from the Bible ; contemporary characters are introduced in the semblance of figures from ancient Jewish history. Lastly, allegories lamenting over the wrongs of certain classes in society are called allegories. One such composition is *The Vision Concerning Piers the Ploughman* of William Langland, which was written with the object of bringing about reform in social and occlesiastical affairs in the England of Richard II's time.

A Parable, which is a form of allegory, is a short tale or story, the incidents of which are taken from everyday experience, and are intended to suggest a moral or spiritual

meaning *e.g.* the parable of the Sower, or that of the Prodigal Son, in the Bible.

The Fable differs from the Parable, inasmuch as it is not confined to ordinary events of everyday life. Dr. Johnson very well defined it thus : "A Fable or Apologue seems to be in its genuine state a narrative, in which begins irrational and sometimes inanimate for the purpose of moral instruction feigned to act and speak with human interests and passions." The fables of *Aesop* and in the *Hitopadesa*, the well-known Indian collection of ethical tales and fables are of this nature. The greatest master in the art of fable-writing in relatively modern times, was the Frenchman, La Fontaine.

There is one other literary form which also contains a secondary meaning deeper than is evident from its surface. It is the Myth. The myth is a primitive way of expounding the mysteries of nature and life by parables, drawn from experience, which most people can understand. Max Muller's view is that in early times men, being unable to form abstract conception, naturally described the simplest phenomena in nature in the same concrete terms which they would use to describe personal actions. Succeeding ages would interpret what was originally a description of natural phenomena into a myth about a person or persons. As an instance in point we have the Sun-Myth referred to in our remarks on the origin of poetry.

(*v*) **Didactic Poetry :** From the earliest time English poets have wished to teach their readers as well as to delight them. Poetry in which men set out to teach a lesson, or give a definition, or express some point of view is called didactic. The lessons which they try to teach may be intensely practical, as in the case of the jingles used in the old days to teach children the alphabet :

> A is for Adam, who was the first man,
> He broke God's command, and thus sin began.

Or, the poet may simply define the 'merry heart;'

> Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
> And merrily heart the stile-a :

A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tries in a mile-a.

Or again, he may give vent in verse to literary critcism or to philosophical speculation. Its function is to convey knowledge and instruction. In fact, didactic poems are sermons in verse. In all such poems which aim at instruction, the merit depends on sound thought, correct principles, clear and apt illustration Among the Romans the greatest didactic, or, more properly, philosophical writer is Lucretius, who wrote a long poem in six books called *De Rerum Nature* (*On the Nature of Things*), in which he expounds his atomic philosophy. In English literature Pope's *Essay on Criticism* and *Essay on Man* belong to the class of purely didactic verse.

(*vi*) **Satire :** It is ridicule of an idea, a person or type of person, or even mankind. Satire has been used from Classical times to mock human vices and frailties. In his verse satires the Roman writer Horace, scoffing gently at man's foibles, is amused rather than sternly indignant, whereas Juvenal, severe in his reaction to man's vices, expresses his moral displeasure with trenchant force. In the Elizabethan Age, John Donne, John Marston and Joseph Hall wrote poetical satires ; their work lacks artistic finish, and is coarse rather than witty. In the seventeenth century, Dryden wrote a number of satires political (*Absalom and Achitophel*) personal (*Mac Flecknow*), religious (*The Hind and the Panther*). After him came Alexander Pope, the great master of verse satire. *The Dunciad*, or . *The Progress of Dulness*, in which most of the writers who had the misfortune to incur the enmity of Pope are pilloried, and some of his Epistles are masterpieces of their kind.

(*vii*) **Epistles in Verse :** All Epistles in verse are not necessarily satiric. An epistle, in its original meaning, is a letter addressed to an absent person ; at the present day we use the term only of letters of an ancient time or of elaborate literary productions which are, or pretend to be, intended for real or imaginary modelled on the *Epistles* of the Roman writer Horace, which are more or less essays on moral or philosophical subjects. They are chiefly distinguished from other poems by being addressed to particular patrons or friends. Verse epistles

need not be confined to moral critical subjects, for poems of love as well as elegiac poems have been cast into this form. The Epistle in verse was not unknown in the Elizabethan Age. Samuel Daniel used it. Later on Dryden excelled in this class of poetry. (*Epistles to the Duchess of Ormond and to Congreve*) as did John Gay and William Congreve, but the greatest writer of Epistles in English is Pope (*Eloisa to Abelard ; The Epistle to Arbuthnot*). Eloisa's epistle to Abelard is an instance of the sentimental, and the one to Arbuthnot of the didactic form.

(*viii*) **Pastoral Poetry :** Pastoral Poetry exhibits to us a a life with which we are accustomed to associate the ideas of peace, of leisure and of innocence ; and, therefore, we readily set open our hearts to such representations as promise to banish from our thoughts the cares of the world and to transport us into calm Elysian regions. At the same time no subject seems to be more favourable to poetry. Amidst rural objects nature presents, on all hands, the finest field for description ; and nothing appears to flow more, of its own accord, into poetical numbers, than rivers and mountains, meadows and hills, flocks and trees, and shepherds void of care. A successful pastoral poem, according to the writer just quoted, must give us the idea of a rural state in which there is ease, equality and innocence ; where the shepherds are gay and agreeable, without being learned and refined, and fein and artless without being gross and wretched. They must not be made to discourse, as they are made to do in some poems, as if they were courtiers or scholars, for then the poem would lack the true spirit of a Pastoral.

The Pastoral like the Sonnet was introduced into England from Italy during the Elizabethan period, and Edmund Spenser was one of the earliest to adopt this form in *The Shepherd's Calendar*, which was eclipsed by the success of Sir Philip Sindey's pastoral prose romance, *Arcadia.* The convention was extremely popular during the sixteenth century, and it was only towards the middle of the seventeenth century that its vogue expired. Phineas Fletcher was the last of the pastoral writers of this age. The fashion was revived for a little while in the eighteenth century, when Alan Ramsay

published *The Gentle Shepherd* in 1725. In our own time this form has found little favour with poets.

(*ix*) **Eclogues and Idylls :** Eclogues and Idylls are terms used loosely in modern literary criticism to denote the same kind of Pastoral Poems. Eclogue originally meant a short pastoral dialogue in verse ; and Idyll comes from a Greek word which signifies a descriptive piece or little picture. Both these terms are used indiscriminately of a short poem of a pastoral or rural character, which aims at depicting the simple incidents in the life of simple country-folks—the loves and jealousies of shepherds.

Tennyson in his *Idylls of the King* has used the word in a different sense. He used it to denote not a poem dealing with pastoral or rural life but a picture-poem, which gives an elaborate and complete representation of any scene of life, and which contains one leading idea.

"Idyllic" in English generally suggests a pastoral or rural setting. We may speak of Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* or of Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree* as idyllic novels, because they paint the simple life of the country-side.

2

POETICAL DEVICES

We have said that the poet 'teaches' and 'delights' by stirring the reader to an unusual pitch of excitement and by making all the discordant elements of his mind and body move together in perfect harmony. But what is the poet's secret, that he, with only the materials of the daily round of existence which we all share, can render back to us a heightened sense of the significance of our own lives together with a more serene detachment?—The answer is —we do not know. We know simply that the poet probably does respond to what is going on about him more finely, more deeply, and with more variety than most of us do ; we know further, that together with a delicate, emotional nature the poet has a power to organize and arrange his thoughts and to fit them into ordered words ; we suspect that this instinct for form not only helps the poet relieve his inner tension but also actually enhances his original experience. Which moment was more precious to Wordsworth when the host of golden daffodils burst upon him as he walked beside the lake, or when, long afterwards, the vision became material for poetry, and flashed "upon the inward eye, which is the bliss of solitude"?

> And then my heart with pleasure fills
> And dances with the daffodils.

The daffodils in the poem are singled out ; irrelevancies have disappeared. The meaning of the experience is left and has achieved permanency through form, not only in the mind of Wordsworth but also in the minds of all who read the poem. The freshness, the surprise of daffodils in early spring is caught for ever, while the memory of the actual walk died when Wordsworth died. "*The emotion of art is impersonal*", says

T. S. Eliot. It has its life in the poem itself, not in the personal biography of the poet. The only word we have to explain this transformation of personal feeling into the complete and perfect poem is "form".

What we mean by the word can best be discovered by a further consideration of the elements of form, rhythm and meter, time, and images. But we must always remember that there are no definite and fixed laws to help us. "In English, by the grace of God and the Muses, the poetry makes the rules, not the rules the poetry", says Saintsbury. Repeated and sympathetic reading of a poem leads one to tentative observations as to how it is organized, and curiously enough these observations as to the form of a poem usually bring one to a deeper and more satisfying understanding of its meaning. For form and meaning are inextricably bound together ; in a sense, the one is the other.

Let us select Milton's poem *On Time* for such a reading, and let us approach it pencil in hand prepared to mark and underline it in any way we please. But first let us read and re-read it, until a general sense of its meaning has been borne in upon us, and we feel fairly satisfied with our way of reading it aloud :

Fly, envious Time, till thou run out thy race,
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy Plummets pace :
And glut thy self with what thy womb devours,
Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross ;
So little is our loss,
So little is thy gain.
For when as each thing bad thou hast entomb'd,
And last of all, thy greedy self consum'd,
Then long, Eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss ;
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood,
When everything that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine,
With Truth, and Peace, and Love shall ever shine
About the Supreme Throne

Of him, t' whose happy-making sight alone,
When once our heav'nly-guided soul shall clime,
Then all this Earthy grossness quit,
Attir'd with Stars, we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee,
O Time.

After one has enjoyed to the full saying aloud these resounding lines, while they are still echoing in one's mind, one begins to realize that Milton is dealing with a problem which has always fascinated poets and scientists alike, the problem of time. He is, in this poem, placing Time in its relation to extremity and doing it so effectively that, though the lineses are for the most part of a regular alternating heavy and light stress throughout, the pitch and intensity with which one reads them change from a nervous, almost irritable impatience while one is still concerned with Time, to a serene calm when one mounts with the poet to Eternity itself, there at last to triumph over Death and Chance and Time. The metrical scheme of the lines is stretched and enlarged by the rhythmic urge which animates the whole.

Notice that though the two lines,

Fly envious Time, till thou run out thy race

and

Attir'd with Stars, we shall for ever sit

have each ten syllables and five stresses, we read them with a more solemn tone and a more deliberated emphasis because of our sense of the slowly emerging meaning of the poem. The meter is fairly regular, except for the three-stress lines which do not really break the meter, for one fills out these lines with pauses. The rhythm, however, is varied and shifted by the sense of the poem, which every reader will respond to with slightly different stress, for the thought itself may be said to have a sort of rhythmic urge, quite apart from the metrical scheme of the lines. It is, in fact, this never-ending conflict between the meter of the line and the rhythm of the whole which gives to this poem, and to all poems, poetic intensity.

But there are other ways in whch Milton "organizes" the poem, besides his use of meter and rhythm. Let us read the poem again. Beginning with impatience earth-bound, confused, we finally are wafted into remote and shining regions where everything

> is sincerely good
> And perfectly divine

dividing the poem directly in two parts of ten lines each comes the "individual kiss" of long Eternity, which frees us from our bonds. Notice that the rime scheme which Milton uses varies as the emotion mounts. Though the poem sweeps us along in one unbroken sentence with no complete stop until Time is finally vanquished we might, if we like, consider the first two sets of four lines as two units each marked by its own rime scheme. Milton's riming in this poem follows no established rules at all ; its effectiveness makes us realize his power to create form for his own purposes. The second four-line unit gains a kind of high and proud defiance by urging the reader through the two short intervening lines in order to bear down on the word gain, answering with such firmness to vain. These two units are then followed by five sets of riming couplets which whirl us up to the "Supreme Throne", and there with the support of our final unit of four lines, linked as our second unit was linked, we find ourselves in a freer, milder atmosphere where Time cannot endure. Again the form fills out the meaning and the meaning gives the form significance, and that is the purpose of time—to make more secure, more firm, more concentrated, the intricately bound thought, which is always attempting to free itself.

Besides Milton's suitable use of rhythm, meter, rime, he makes a demand upon our power of seeing, which is another demand of form. One cannot see Time, Eternity, Joy, Truth, Peace, Love, Death, and Chance, and yet in this soaring poem, as in the music of Bach, as in the paintings of El Creco, something visual accompanies our enjoyment of the mounting thought. Perhaps the fact that Time is addressed directly—"run out thy race," "glut thy self with what thy womb devours"—gives us a sense of large and shrouded figures

of an allegorical sort on a canvass varying from stormy dark to shining images are never more than approximately akin to those in the mind of the poet. The important thing is that calling upon our power to summon up the actual colour and shape of the figures involved we thereby are made to feel more completely the final serenity, when "our heavenly-guided soul" shall sit "attir'd with Stars," triumphant over Death and Chance and Time. Though the images are intentionally shrouded in this poem, the words themselves have a clarity and precision which cancel the vagueness of the images. One loves to pronounce the words, especially the vowels, as distinctly as possible, each one presenting itself as pecualiarly perfect. We do not merely imagine that the very sounds of the words fit themselves to the nervous impatience of "Fly envious Time, till thou run out thy race," with its array of sharp vowels, and that the *l's* of the next line are actually heavy. There is a fullness and roundness to the line, "And Joy shall overtake us as a flood" ; there is a special pleasure in hearing the last phrase of the poem, "and thee, O Time," chime with the first. The poet's power to fit the very sounds of words to the mood of the poem is an aspect of the poet's sense of organic form, which can never be precisely defined because it varies in every poem.

It is form which gives a poem "life," quite apart from the actual daily life of the poet. Who knows—and indeed does it matter ?—what personal reasons moved Milton with such truly divine words to express for us our mortal defect in terms of Time, our immortal triumph in terms of Eternity ? The poem is "impersonal" ; it has what is called form. And now let us examine in more detail each of the four aspects of form touched on here—rhythm and meter, time and images—remembering that it is not a mechanical sort of form, dependent on rules, which interests us, but form which grows out of the thought itself, or, as Coleridge would say, "organic form."

1. Rhythm

John Livingston Lowes, in an interesting lecture on Shelley's poetic methods, based on a series of Shelley's

revisions of a single poem, pointed out that the poet in his first sketch for his poem marked out the time with dashes, and only filled in with an occasional word. More words took their place among the dashes as the rhythm became established in his mind and he felt his way towards an articulate expression :

> O world ! O life ! O time !
> On whose last steps I climb,
> Trembling at that where I had stood before ;
> When will return the glory of your prime ?
> No more—Oh, never more !

Notice the heavy drag of the first two lines ; the balance and poise of the third, which in the next line is gathered together in one despairing question—"When will return the glory of your prime ?"—to sink away at last into utter dejection. The strong rhythmic feeling of Shelley's mood came to him before words were found to give it expression. It is to rhythmic feeling, then, that we must ourselves first respond ; the poem will yield its meaning gradually as we surrender ourselves to its emotion.

The physiological fact that we are ourselves creatures of rhythm is the reason we are able to share in the rhythmic expression, and thence in thought and feeling, of the poets of all ages. Our breathing, our walking, the tempo with which we type a letter, is rhythmic, slow or rapid, regular or disjointed, according to the mood which we are thus unconsciously expressing in every gesture. Rhythm, then, underlies all life ; it is not confined to art alone, and it may be defined as that in us which responds to recurrent time intervals. As in music and dancing, so in poetry, time is the chief factor. It was in terms of time that Shelley found expression for his melancholy mood, it is in terms of time that we come to share his mood.

Not only is there a definite rhythm to each line to which one responds as completely as one can ; there is also a rhythm to the whole, and this is indicated by the stanzas, by refrains, by words repeated, by the thought enlarged and finally brought to a close. The second stanza—and there are but two—of

this poem reflects back upon the first stanza when we re-read the whole and sublty influence our way of modulating our voices. And for this reason one must read the poem again, that the whole may play upon each part, backwards and forwards.

> Out of the day and night,
>   A joy has taken flight ;
> Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
>   Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
> No more—Oh, never more !

The resignation, the exhaustion, of the second stanza, make the line, "No more—Oh, never more !" sound on our ears more sadly than the same line at the end of the first. One reads it the first time with less finality, with stanza, something of an upward urge ; one reads it the second time with the quiet, even tone of despair.

To D. H. Lawrence "the hidden emotional pattern" of poetry, the rhythm shaped by the feeling of the poet, was more important than meter :

> I think more of a bird with broad wings flying and lapsing through the air, than anything, when I think of meter...... It all depends on the pause—the natural pause, the natural lingering of the voice according to the feeling—it is the hidden emotional pattern that makes poetry, not the obvious form:

and this "hidden emotional pattern" is the pattern of rhythm.

2. Meter

Metrical pattern, however, seems to be essential to transport us to the level of consciousness experienced by the poet himself, to enable us to share thoughts and emotions which are beyond our ordinary range. Rhythm marks prose as well as poetry ; meter or regularity of time parts within a line, is the distinguishing sign of poetry. One has only to repeat with exaggerated emphasis Lawrence's sentence above to observe that it has a very beautiful rhythm. But it is equally clear that it has no regular pattern of sound. For the sake

of the contrast, repeat Shelley's stanza. The time-pattern is very regular, each stanza is made up of two three-stress lines, and ending with a three-stress line. Perhaps irregular rhythmic patterns, such as those used by D. H. Lawrence himself, and many other writers of free verse, will finally displace the more regular metrical organization of traditional verse. But it is not probable, since the physiological fact remains that in moments of excitement our speech, gestures and steps fall into a more definitely marked rhythm, and poetry is the language of strong feeling. Though we enjoy free verse very much, our enjoyment is essentially that of our pleasure in rhythmic prose.

But to say that meter is essential to poetry is not to say that the poet is bound by an unalterable metric pattern. Though the beat of Shelley's poem is strong and firm, it only approximates an exact rhythm which we feel subconsciously should be there; though the meter seems clearly defined for a line or two, it is swifty shifted only to regain again its original pattern. For the principle behind all art, which is always a struggle between inner spontaneity and outer control, is that the rigidity of the scheme be constantly modified by the life which flows through it. After two lines of alternating unstressed and stressed syllyables, Shelley, for instance, reverses his patterns and writes :

> Trembling at that where I had stood before
> When will return the glory of your prime,?
> No more—Oh, never more!

The first foot in each of these lines begins with a stressed syllable, perhaps to make us feel the physical strain of the weary climb. In spite of this irregularity of meter, we stay close enough to the established pattern to feel the variation only as a deeply satisfying conflict between the urge of the emotion and the control of the form. And it is in this conflict, shifting and changing with every line, that the pleasure of reading poetry aloud is found. Should one read "O world ! O life ! O time!" with a mounting emphasis, or should one almost ignore the stress on "where" in the next line, and place a borrowed emphasis on "last," which actually does

not carry the stress? How long should one pause at the end of lines one and two and at the beginning of line five? For a whole beat, silently felt? The answer depends on the reader's age, his temperament, his mood at the moment, for he, with the poet, is the "creator," by means of his rhythmic expressiveness of the poem which emerges.

It is clear, then, that though we mark all the stresses of a line in the same way, no two stresses are precisely alike. We shall, however, use the word "foot" in our discussion of various familiar meters to indicate a certain number of syllables in a unit, for one's perception of the basic rhythm of the poem is enlarged by training one's ear to hear more accurately the different patterns used by English poets. They are :

Iambus : One unstressed and one stressed syllable
Impe/rious Cae/sar dead/and turned to clay.

Trechee : One stressed and one unstressed syllable.
Creep in/to thy/narrow/bed.

Spondee : Two stressed syllables
The gray sea/and the long/black land.

Anapaest : Two unstressed and one stressed syllable
I am lord/of the fowl/and the brute.

Dactyl : One stressed and two unstressed syllables
Swiftly walk/over the/Western wave.

The first three kinds of feet are sometimes called "duple" rhythm, each beat representing two counts. This is the rhythm of walking. The last two kinds of feet are often called "triple" rhythm, and may be compared to waltzing. Very little experience in reading poetry teaches one that poetry is not a matter of syllable counting. But a certain amount of syallable counting actually seems to make one's ear more sensitive to the organic rhythm underlying the whole.

English verse was strongly marked by meter long before rime was considered a necessary adornment of poetry. Though there has not been a revival of the alliterative verse of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English poetry since the fourteenth century,

blank verse which came into vogue with the great Elizabethan dramas, is still the favourite meter for full-bodied, and dignified poetry. Perhaps the essential reason for the hold of this five-stress iambic line is simply that it does not fall apart into two equal halves, as the four and the six-stress lines are always in danger of doing. For instance, observe the four-stress line :

Bind up, bind up, your yellow hair
And tie it on your neck
And see you look as maiden-like
As the day that we first met.

And now consider the six-stress line :

Then labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
O rest ye, brother Mariners, we will not wander more.

Nor has the five-stress iambic line the song-like quality of the three-stress line,

Hail to thee, blithe spirit !
Bird thou never wert—
That from heaven or near it
Pourest thy full heart.

But probably the real glory of blank verse is that, though the iambic beat of the ten-syllable line is maintained, the pressure of the thought is felt filling out the lines with its own strength, disregarding rime, letting the pauses fall where they will, often, indeed, shifting the meter from iambic to trochee or to spondee. Othello's greeting to Desdemona when she joins him in Cyprus illustrates the variety, the plasticity, the strength of blank verse.

Othello ;

It gives me wonder great as my content
To see you here before me, O my soul's joy !
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death !
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus-high and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven ! If it were now to die,

'T were now to be most happy ; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

Desdemona :

The heavens forbid . . . .

One observes, in the first place, that one pauses only for the fraction of a second at the end of the first line, that the real pause comes in the middle of the second. But notice, too, that Shakespeare does not let us stray too far from the rhythmic effect of the pause at the end of a line. For the next three lines the pause and the line end together and then we mount again, and with

. . . the labouring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus-high, and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven !

Then a long pause, the longest in the speech, for here the whole mood shifts, and Othello begins again in quite a different key, as though he were conversing with himself :

If it were now to die,
'T were now to be most happy, ; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

And Desdemona quickly takes him up, filling out the line with,

The heavens forbid . . . .

One observes, in the second place, that Shakespeare does not maintain the regularity of his stressed and unstressed syllables for long, but gives us a sense of the variety of rhythmic conversation by a quick change of pattern :

It gives me wonder great as my content
To see you here before me, O my soul's joy !

By disregarding the stress entirely at times, or else by letting it fall lightly, the poet keeps us from feeling the artificiality of meter :

May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!

Neither *the* nor *they* are strong enough to bear the stress nor are they required to do so, for the essential time beat is maintained by the rhythm of the whole passage.

The language of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton, and many others found scope in the freest and yet the most sustained of English meters. The greatness of the Elizabethan drama rests in part on the fact that the dramatists discovered the strength and range of blank verse by matching impassioned language to the meter of poetry, and by lending to poetry the naturalness of prose.

3. Rhyme

The greater part of English verse since the time of Chaucer has been rymed—that is to say, the stressed vowels and the following consonants are alike at the end of two or more lines of verse. Rymes are frequently arranged in pairs or couplets (aa, bb, cc, dd, and so forth), or else alernately (abab). There may be variations and combinations of these two principles; such as, ababab; ababcc; aabcbe ; abababcc ; and so forth. In quatrains, alternate lines are sometimes left unrymed, thus : xaya. Let us now consider why it is that one's ears are pleased by ryme, which is, after all, not essential to poetry, as rhythm and meter are.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the iambic pentameter line of blank verse was written in rhythmical couplets and was called "heroic" verse, though it sounds much less heroic to our ears than blank verse. Sir John Denham, standing on Cooper's Hill in 1642, looked down on the swiftly-flowing, but self-contained Thames and thought of the river as a perfect example of how noble verse might be made to flow :

> O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
> My great example, as it is my theme !
> Though deep, yet clear, though gentle yet not dull,
> Strong without rage, without o'er-flowing full.

One notices at once that the pauses coincide with the ends of the line, though in each line there is also a definitely marked pause in the middle, one observes that the stresses

fall on the important words and that there is only a slight disparity between the rhythmic emphasis which the reader is moved to place upon the lines and the metrical stresses of the lines. And this is one of the chief reasons for ryme, that it marks clearly the metric pattern. The conflict between rhythm and meter is almost resolved in the heroic couplet; the result is that one does not feel any very strong emotion and is quite willing to agree that now "sense" and "reason" are in control. Rymed couplets are easier to write than blank verse, for the rymes themselves are pleasantly distracting and the reader demands century, and many others after him, and indeed add a fresh intellectual quality and a sharp satiric turn, which, as Dryden said, "tickles even while it hurts". Of George Villiers, Second Duke of Buckingham, he wrote :

Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong
Was everything by starts and nothing long.

Moreover, Dryden was able to use the same meter to express his mood of lonely doubt, as well as his bursts of personal venom :

Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
To lonely weary wandering travellers
Is Reason to the soul......

Though heroic verse stays more serenely within the limits of the line, the conflict between meter and rhythm remains, as it does in all poetry. But in this verse, in contrast to blank verse, the line structure is reinforced by the ryme, and the effect is that the grip of the pattern is tightened.

Ryme is not only used to make blank verse walk in more orderly heroic couplets, but it is also used to organise groups of lines into stanzas, from the simplest ballad form, really intended to be sung :

In somer when the shaves be sheyne,
    And leves be large and long,
Hit is full merry in feyre foreste
    To here the foulys song,

to the complicated ryme royal, Spenserian stanza, ode, sonnet and other patterns. All of these verse forms are different

device to achieve the same end—to reinforce the rhythm of the verse and hence to make more inevitable our understanding of the poem. Though various pattern have names, the truth is that each poet does what he pleases with the inherited form. Since each poet responds to experience in his own way, the conflict he makes us feel between rhythm and matter is in every case essentially unique. Ryme is simply another way of tightening the organization of the poem against which the larger rhythm struggles. Listen to the use Wordsworth makes of ryme, for instance, in his *Intimation of Immortality* :

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
> To me did seem
> Apparell'd in celestial light,
> The glory and the freshness of a dream.

How one holds to the ryme in this free and drifting rhythm, and how skilfully and quickly Wordsworth shifts his ryme schemes !

> The rainbow comes and goes
> And lovely is the rose :
> The moon doth with delight
> Look round her when the heavens are bare :
> Waters on a starry night
> Are beautiful and fair...

The confliet between the larger ryhthm and the meter is felt more strongly in rymed stanzas than in heroic couplets because the thought in rymed stanzas tends to be more discursive. But this is only a tendency ; the real poet, by the very strength of his feeling, bends any form to his use and makes the reader feel, in the very midst of the conflict between spontaneity and control, the power of poetry.

4. Images and Words

We have said that organic form is the essence of poetry ; that because of our common human response to rhythm, made stronger by meter and ryme, the poet and the reader of poetry

are able to share expereience. What we wish to seize from this sharing of experience is a kind of truth, the poet's truth, and this, after all, is said to us in words, not in rhythm.

Because of the heightened emotional state of poet, his words are never entirely abstract because of our heightened emotional state when we read the poem, we are able to understand the abstract truth behind the concrete pictures the poet gives us. For the poet's language is the language of imagery, and his image, perfect and satisfying as they are, always represent truth, no matter how simple, no matter how difficult to translate again into abstract words. It is fór the sake of this truth, which Keats says in the same as beauty, that we are eager to enter completely into the thought of a poem.

Though the language of poetry is images, the vocabulary of poetry is the vocabulary we hear around us. Wordsworth settled the question nearly a hundred and fifty years ago when he issued a blast against "poetic" words in his famous Preface, and declared that he was going to use "a selection of language really used by men".. At the same time Wordsworth hoped to cast over his words "a certain colouring of imagination whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way". By the strength of the feeling of the poet, ordinary words are made to sing themselves into our hearts and to speck their meaning. Masefield, in *Cargoes*, give us two stanzas of "poetic" language, and then, in the third, makes use of "the language really used by men", over which "a certain colouring of imagination" has been cast :

> Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir
> Rowing home to heaven in sunny Palestine,
> With a cargo of ivory,
> And apes and peacocks,
> Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.
> Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
> Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores
> With a cargo of diamonds,
> Emeralds, amethysts,
> Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores,

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-stack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

Though the vocabulary of the third stanza may be said to be less "poetic" than that of the first two, the sounds of the last stanza are actually just as beautiful. By the sharp contrast of the images, Masefield makes us understand the romantic feeling with which he observes British ships in the Channel on a windy March day.

Presenting to us familiar images in our own daily language the poet is able by the way in which he groups and associates his words and images to cast "a certain colouring of the imagination" over ordinary things and thus to express truth for us. For we emerge finally with a sense of having understood what before we missed, of having extended the realms of our awareness. As John Livingston Lowes puts it, "Poetry starts from the actual and ends in the true."

Keats tells us in one of his letters, that he spent a morning in a somewhat moody state of mind, listening to the song of a nightingale in a nearby tree. A simple prose statement of how he sat in the garden listening to the bird does not tell us what really happened in this transition from "the actual" to "true". It can be said only in poetry ; it can be said only by images :

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
    My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
    One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk.

And we, with Keats, sink Lethe-wards, release our hold on the world about us, and let the song of a bird lead us to a comprehension of—what ? Let us listen first, and let each image form itself in our minds :

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
    But being too happy in thy happiness

That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,
    In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
    Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

The bird, invisible, is a "light-winged Dryad of the trees." The very metaphor, together with the reference to hemlock and to Lethe, reminds us the birds were singing as freshly many centuries ago as they are now. Their unchanging music helps to leave the present world unseen, and to "fade away into the forest dim."

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
    What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret,
    Here, where men sit and hear each other grown.

"Though the dull brain perplexes and retards," the song of the invisible bird is enough to release, to let him "fly to thee" "on the viewless wings of poesy." For now the garden in which Keats is seated has become remote :

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
    Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs.

But in " embalmed darkness," a darkness made sweet by the grass, the thicket and the fruit-tree wild," does Keats, in his mood of restlessness, let the sound of the bird's song lead him further and further away from the "actual," nearer and nearer to the "true," the true, which, in this poem, is an apprehension of the meaning of the death of the individual :

Darkling I listen ; and for many a time
    I have been half in love with easeful death...
Now more than ever seems it rich to die
    To cease upon the midnight with no pain,

and the immortality of beauty itself :

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
    No hungry generations tread thee down ;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
    In ancient days by emperor and clown ;
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
    Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for
    home

She stood in tears amid the alien corn :
The same that of times hath
Charm'd magic easements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

The song of the bird, and all the associations which cluster around the song in Keats's mind, have led him in terms of imagery to a comprehension of the relation between our transitory selves and all the imperishable beauty of the world, a comprehension which we share as we ourselves, led by Keats as he was led by the bird, enter the "forest dim" of our minds and emerge again into the actual world, deepened and harmonized :

Fled is that music :—do I wake or sleep ?

Just as we can never hope to recapture the exact rhythmic stress which Keats read over his poems, so we can never see the same images. Our images of the flowers in the garden, "fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves," and of Ruth

.........when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn,

are different from the images in Keats's mind. No matter. The point is that we too create the images as vividly, as wholly, as we can with as rich association as we are able to evoke—and that the images do give up their meaning to us. For images are the language with which the poet expresses the truths of his heart ; all that the poet has enjoyed and suffered, all that he has observed, will be fused and stilled again by this "image-making faculty," which Sir Philip Sidney says in the very mark of the poet.

Why this should be so we do not know. We do know, however, that after moments of excitement, when our minds and emotion seem to be deeply involved, we are apt to call up again isolated images stored in our imaginations—the gesture of hand, the quality of a voice—which for ever symbolize for us the whole experience. The poet, finer in his responses, richer in his power of association, must be able by means of these symbols to fuse the experience for us into one perfect unity, making us feel the abstract in the concrete and the concrete in the abstract, and thus to give meaning to our otherwise not quite realised lives. Coleridge's description

of "the streamy nature of association which thinking curbs and rudders," helps us to understand the mental process of the poet searching for expression, in which images are integral parts, not superimposed ornaments with which the poet adorns his poem. How better, except by associating the song of an invisible bird to undying music, could Keats have told us that, though we die, beauty is never vanquished ? Evoking image of familiar sights and sounds, the poet makes us feel their import by suggesting the shadowed truth which they express. Using words that are thoroughly familiar to us, he so orders them that they reverberate in our minds and suggest more than words can ever say explicitly.

Poetry, then, does not make us experience directly the feeling of love, or hate, hunger, or humiliation, or relief ; by a process only partially understood the poet takes these emotions known to us all, and bodies them forth in ordered words. By responding us fully as we can to the demands made upon us by poetry to hear it, and see it, and share in its mood, we ourselves learn indirectly the meaning of these basic emotions. Like the poet, we feel a new inner harmony which makes us at once more detached from the world about us and more completely as a part of it. The terms of poetry which we have been discussing here—rhythm, meter, ryme, and images—are only words which we use to describe an experience of concentrated intensity, the exact nature of which we do not understand. True form is a part of the very life of the poem itself. As Coleridge wrote in his essay on "Shakespeare, a poet Generally" : "The form is mechanic, when on any given material we impress a predetermined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material ; —as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate ; it shapes, as it develops itself from within, and the fulness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Nature, the prime genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers, is equally inexhaustible in forms ;—each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within—its trne image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror." (Adapted)

3

APPLICATION OF POETICAL DEVICES

Having probed into the various poetical devices or techniques, we now give below certain poetical pieces which indicate their proper application :

(1) Imagery

My heart is like a singing bird
    Whose nest is in a watered shoot :
My heart is like an apple-tree
    Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit ;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
    That paddles in a halcyon sea ;
My heart is gladder than all these
    Because my love is come to me.
Raise me a dais of silk and down ;
    Hang it with vair and purple dyes ;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
    And peacocks with a hundred eyes :
Work in the gold and silver grapes,
    In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys ;
Because the birthday of my life
    Is come, my love is come to me.

(*A Birthday :* Christina Rossetti)

(*i*) We are to concern ourselves with imagery in the above stanzas. When you read 'A Birthday' your reading was accompanied by certain visualizations : in the first four lines visualizations of a singing bird and a laden apple tree. These visualizations—or, if you like, mental 'pictures'—were indeed part of the process of reading ; they marked your response to the words of the poem. We can start, then, with one of the

definitions of the word 'image' in *American College Dictionary*: 'a mental picture or representation.' But 'image' is used in the discussion of poetry also for the word or group of words which stimulates the response, which calls up the mental representation. 'Imagery' is a collective term for a group of images in this second sense, often for similes and metaphors which result for the reader in images. And, although the word 'image' in its primary sense has to do nothing with things seen, it has been extended to cover the other senses ; for example, it is usual to speak of sound imagery, as we did in reference to the last stanza of 'To Autumn,' or of a tactile image.

(*ii*) It may be that Rossetti's poem seemed to you, on first reading, rather slight. You will be interested, then, to see whether attention to the way in which the imagery is combined enriches it for you. But first, do you know all the words ? What is a 'halcyon sea' ? What is 'vair' ? What is a dais ? And how about the title ? Do you take 'Birthday' in exactly its ordinary sense ? Does it imply just the beginning of a new year in the age of the 'I' of the poem ? Where in the poem does the full meaning of the title become clear ?

(*iii*) The first stanza is developed in a series of three similes, which present the reader with three images. Comment on the order in which they come, and the way in wbich they are interpreted in the two lines.

(*iv*) In the second stanza the 'I' of the poem asks for a dais decorated in a most exotic fashion. The imagery in the first four lines is of familiar English things ; that in the second stanza suggests the strange and unfamiliar East. And have you noted that the last two lines of first stanza are transitional, and that they say, directly enough, that the imagery of the first stanza is insufficient to represent the experience ?

(*v*) If the experience is represented by two kinds of imagery may we conclude that it is characterized by two kinds of feeling ? Is it not the imagery itself that conveys to us the double nature of experience of falling in love, an experience

which seems, at the same moment, natural and inevitable and strange and wonderful ? Has it occurred to you that it would be very difficult to write a prose account of this poem without including a good deal of interpretation ?

(*iv*) How far does a full realization of the imagery depend upon the reader's literary experience ? If the words 'halcyon,' 'vair, and 'pomegranates' were strange to you, has the dictionary given you a full imaginative grasp of the imagery ? When you meet these words in another place, will they have gained significance for you through your encounter with them here ?

(2) Metaphor

What soft, cherubic creatures
These gentle women are !
One would as soon assault a plush
Or violate a star.
Such dimity convictions,
A horror so refined
Of freckled human nature,
Of deity ashamed,—
It's such a common glory,
A fisheman's degree !
Redemption, brittle lady,
Be so ashamed of thee.

(*What Soft, Cherubic Creatures* : Emily Dickinson).

(*i*) This poem requires considerable activity on the part of the reader, for the metaphors carry highly compressed meaning and the expression elliptical throughout. The last two lines in the first stanza are an instance of ellipsis : we expect 'as soon assault a plush......' What are other ellipses in the poem ?

(*ii*) If one is to comprehend a metaphorical poem, he must first know the literal sense of the words used. Do you need to look up 'cherubic,' 'dimity' and 'redemption' ? Be sure you find the definition of 'cherubic' most appropriate here. Look for a definition of 'redemption' marked theological —perhaps you will find it under 'redeem instead of the substantive form.

(*iii*) Do you see that the metaphor 'dimity convictions,' in joining such disparate things as convictions and dimity, carries a judgment about these gentlewomen ? You must realize of course that the soft, refined material called dimity (often delicately patterned in floral design) was worn by women of Miss Dickinson's generation in the afternoon for polite and leisurely occasions. And how about 'freckled numan nature' ? Does 'freckled' suggest that the blemishes on human nature age, or maybe, of a sort we rather like ? Or are we to remember that 'these gentlewomen' would have taken great pains to avoid freckles ?

(*iv*) Human nature is certainly common, but what are the implications of 'common glory' ? And what meaning' or what image, arises for you in 'fisherman's degree' ? Has the poet taken 'fisherman' just as an instance of an ordinary man ? Has the word other suggestions ? How many of the twelve disciples were fishermen ?

(*v*) The ellipses in the first two stanzas are easy enough to fill in ; the last stanza may bother you a bit. Try thinking of it as dramatic : the first two lines as what one of these gentlewomen says, or would say ; the last two as the comment of the individual speaking in the first two stanzas. We might write some such prose account of the last two lines as this : 'If you, my fine lady, are ashamed of human nature, Redemption (or God's grace) will be (or may be) ashamed of you. The meaning seems to be that one must recognize one's human nature before he can be raised above it.

(*vi*) Can you explain or justify the apparent contradiction between the image in 'soft, cherubic creatures' and the image in 'brittle lady' ?

(*vii*) Write an interpretative account of the whole poem, filling in the ellipses and expanding the metaphors. In order to be sure of giving a full account, assume you are writing for an unperceptive reader who needs much help.

(3) Irony and Paradox

When I watch the living meet,
And the moving pageant file
Warm and breathing through the street
Where I lodge a little while,

If the heats of hate and lust
  In the house of flesh are strong,
Let me mind the house of dust
  Where my sojourn shall be long.

In the nation that is not
  Nothing stands that stood before;
There revenges are forgot,
  And the hater hates no more;

Lovers lying two by two
  Ask not whom they sleep beside,
And the bridegroom all night through
  Never turns him to the bride.

(*When I Watch the Living Meet* : A. E. Housman).

(*i*) Irony is easier to illustrate than to define. We shall examine this poem carefully before attempting any definition. Consider all the metaphorical expressions and point out those which provide for contrast.

(*ii*) Considering their relation to the whole poem, what are the implications of the expression 'the moving pageant file' and 'where I lodge' ?

(*iii*) The second stanza turns on the contrast between two metaphors : 'The house of flesh' and 'the house of dust'. If, in the next two stanzas, the metaphors change, is the same contrast maintained ? Note that 'the nation that is not' is a paradoxical expression—an apparent contradiction.

(*iv*) In the last stanza we are to think of grave as beds, and of the dead as lovers. Now there is a possible analogy between the grave and a bed, and we commonly speak of the dead going to their rest. But it is not only the implied comparison that is effective here ; within the comparison there is a startling contrast in which disparate things—sexual experience and death—are brought suddenly together. As one might expect, poets before Housman have used this juxtaposition. You will remember this epigram from *The Greek Anthology* :

Thou hoardest thy maidenhood ; and to what profit ? for when thou are gone to Hades thou wilt not find a lover, O

girl. Among the living are the Cyprian's pleasures ; but in Acheron, O maiden, we shall lie bones and dust.

Because he gives it greater concentration, Andrew Marvell makes the statement in this epigram unforgettable :

The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Emerson use the juxtaposition of 'lust' and 'grave' in a simile ; when the 'I' or 'Hamatreya' has learned that the earth endures and man's possession of any part of it passes, he says

When I heard the Earth-song
I was no longer brave ;
My avarice cooled
Like lust in the chill of the grave.

In these lines, as in the last stanza of the Houseman's poem, the contrast is pointed up by paradoxical statement. There is a somewhat similar paradox—though it comes to us in questions—in this stanza from Thomas Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' :

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

But do you find this stanza as effectively as any one of the passages quoted above? Can you explain your reaction?

(4) Rhythm and Meter.

Some beauties yet no Precepts can declare,
For there's a happiness as well as care.
Music resemble Poetry, in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-hand alone can reach.
If, where the rules not far enough extend,
(Since rules were made but to promote their end)
Some lucky Licence answer to the full

Th' intent propos'd, that Licence is a rule.
Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,
May boldly deviate from the common track ;
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,
Which without passing thro' the judgment, gains
The heart, and all its end at once attains.

(*From an Essay an Criticism :* Alexander Pope).

(*i*) Pope is saying that, although there are established principles in poetry, they are not binding upon poets who have the creative ability to ignore them and yet to attain the end of pleasing and touching the reader. The passage is particularly appropriate to a discussion of meter, for good poets have commonly been impatient of the rules of prosody. Do you need to look up the allusion to Pegasus?

(*ii*) The verse from Pope used here is called the closed or heroic couplet : each two rhyming lines are unit of the sense (Lines 3-5 are a triplet, a fairly frequent variation. The name 'heroic' comes from the use of such verse in the heroic play). Pope's verse is thought by some persons to be too 'regular' and therefore montonous. Perhaps these persons, or some of them, have not read Pope's verse carefully enough to hear the subtle variation for which it is distinguished—or perhaps their tastes have been conditioned by a too exclusive attention to other poetic styles. It is true that we can pick out couplets which are entirely 'regular' : for example, lines 12-13. But point out lines in which there is subtle variation accounted for by partial stresses, or by the interplay of syntactical and metrical patterns, or by both. (If you do not feel that you are sufficiently aware of this variation, try giving the passage a reading with somewhat exaggerated attention to the punctuation.) And note the way in which the couplet pattern lends itself to incisive statement.

(*iii*) Five-stress verse in couplets may be used, however, for effects quite different from the effect of these lines of Pope's. The next selection is an example,

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever :
Its loveliness increases, it will never

Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quite for us, and sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quite breathing:
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits.

(*From Endymion* : John Keats)

(*i*) You notice at once that these couplets are not closed and that many of the lines are run on—that both the sense and the cadence carry over into the next line. (A line that is not run-on may be called 'end-stopped.') Try to describe, in general terms, the effect of the running-on of a large proportion of the lines. Do run-on lines tend to emphasize or to obscure the rhymes? Consider particularly the double rhymes: ever-never, breathing-wreathing.

(*ii*) Keats's line,

'Some shape of beauty moves away the pall' has as regular an alternation of unstressed-stressed syllables as Pope's line:

"And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art".

If one considers these lines in isolation, they have much the same rhythmical effect. But lines of verse do not come in isolation—an obvious fact, but often forgotten. Consider such lines as

...yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits.

Are you not aware that in them the interplay of syntactical and metrical pattern is of particular importance and complexity? But if you care to mark the stressed syllables in the whole passage, you will see that there is also a considerable deviation from the pattern line. Consider especially (and in their relationship to the context) the lines :

Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

Therefore, on every morrow are we wreathing.

Mark the stresses in these lines, distinguishing partial stresses. Can you find lines in the selection from Pope that vary as much from the pattern line as these do? If the whole of the Keats's passage were made up of such lines, do you think the effect would be pleasing? Why not?

(*iii*) You have noted that in a poem written in stanzas, or in a sonnet, the rhymes, make a pattern which helps to organize the poem. In this passage the effect is somewhat different, is it not? We may consider that the rhymes here make a third pattern, playing against the pattern of the syntax by giving a slight emphasis to the ends of lines, increasing our consciousness of the lines as metrical units. But since the syntax so seldom allows us a pause on a rhyming word, the effect of Keats's verse is as much like that of blank verse with extended cadences as it is like that of Pope's couplets.

(*iv*) Compare the effect of Keats's run-on couplets with that of Shakespeare's blank verse in the passages which follow. The first is certainly familiar to you; it is from *The Merchant of Venice* and is a part of Portia's speech to the Duke's court on behalf of Antonio. The second passage, which represents the blank verse of Shakespeare's late plays, is from *The Tempest.* Prospero who speaks it, has presented, through his magic art, a masque. The masque has just come to an end (Adapted)

(5) Lyric

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
    Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
    State in wonted manner keep :
        Hesperus entreats thy light,
        Goddess excellently bright.
Earth, let not thy envious shade
    Dare itself to interpose ;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
    Heaven to clear when day did close :

Bless us then with wished sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy cryseal-shining quiver,
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever :
Thou that mak'st a day of night—
Gooddess excellently bright.

(*Hymn to Diana* : Ben Jonson)

(*i*) Diana, virgin goddess of the moon and the chaste, was a favourite mythological figure in Elizabethan literature. From one point of view, Jonson's 'Hymn to Diano' may be considered an extended and graceful literary allusion, recalling most of the familiar attributes of Diana. (Perhaps you should look up Diana in Gayley's *Classic Myths in English Literature and Atr.*) Interpret, however, the second stanza, and comment on Jonson's success in fusing science and myth.

(*ii*) We do not believe in Diana, nor did the Elizabethans. Yet certainly the poem would fail were there not some imaginative acceptance of Diana as a goddess while we read it. How far does success of the poem depend upon our natural tendency to personify the things of nature ? Is it possible that certain religious habits of mind of the Christian reader carry over in the reading of 'Hymn to Diana'? How important is the rhythm of the poem to its total effect ? Does the rhythm have the effect of indication ? Consider the effect of the refrain.

(*iii*) The personification of Diana in the 'Hymn to Diana' was established in myth centuries before Jonson used it. Does it, therefore, have an immediacy of effect ?

(6) The Sonnet Form.

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned
Mindless of just honours; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;

With it Camoens soothed an exile's grief.
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow : a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faeryland
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating stains—alas, too few !

(*Scorn Not the Sonnet* : William Wordsworth)

(*i*) Since a large portion of the best poems in our language are sonnets, the form itself deserves our attention. Moreover, careful attention to the structure of sonnets will help us to be aware of the importance of poetic form and to realize what varied uses a particular form may have. As you may have gathered from the sonnet above, the sonnet from came to England from Italy, although English poets have used it in their distinctive fashions.

(*ii*) Wordsworth wrote this poem about 1827. In the eighteenth century the sonnet form despite its use by the great poet Wordsworth mentions and many others, had for a time fallen out of favour: Wordsworth's own use of it did much to reinstate it. His contention in this sonnet—that although the sonnet is a brief poem-form it may effectively be used in many ways—is important to us.

4

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

SOLVED EXAMPLES

1

Oft when my spirit doth spred her bolder wings,
In mind to mount up to the purest sky,
It down is weighed with thought of earthly things,
And clogd with burden of mortality :
Where, when that soverayne beauty it doth spy,
Resembling heavens glory in her light
Drawne with sweet pleasures bayt, it back doth fly,
And unto heaven forgets her former flight.
There my fraile fancy, fed with full delight,
Doth bath in blisse, and mantlenth most at ease ;
Ne thinks of other heaven, but how it might
Her harts desire with most contentment please.
Hart need not wish none other happinesse,
But here on earth to have such heavens blisse.

(*Amroetti*, *LXXII*—Edmund Spenser).

Critical Appreciation.

In the first four lines Spenser presents the theme......In the next four lines the reader expects to find some exploration of the theme, but finds, instead, simply further statement...... In the well constructed lyric one would expect in the last lines to discover the intellectual resolution. Here, however, there is no dramatic emotional situation to be resolved. There is merely further explanation couched in terms of graceful tribute and...the difference between the poems of Herrick and Stevens and Spenser is the distinction between the poetry of exploration and the poetry of exposition. Herrick and Stevens

present material for the reader to work through ; Spenser presents an imagined experience unequivocally stated. There is in the first two poems an intellectual and emotional problem to be settled in terms of the material presented. Spenser, as a Christian, represents and illustrates a Christian attitude ; he does not re-experience it. He does not earn his attitude.

This does not arouse spirited defence of the *Amoretti*, of all Spenser's mature poems the least exciting, especially if one agrees that Herrick's *Mad Maid's Song* and Stevens' *Peter Quince at the Clavier* are finer poems than this particular sonnet. The sonnet, however, is in its way well constructed and contains more of the qualities which O'Connor demands than he seems to realize. It is not dramatic, yet there is more sinew in the convolutions of its neo-Platonic thought than casually appears ; there is even more surprise and tension, since underlying the whole sonnet is the pull between heaven and earth. The first four lines express the soul's aspirations heavenward defeated by mortality ; the next four are statement, but "exploratory statement" essential to particularize "mortality", showing the soul, snared by desire, accepting a substitute heaven. The octave leaves us with a sense of true heaven forgotten in earthly illusion. The opening lines of the sestet, expatiating on this earthly bliss, are the only part of the poem which can be dismissed as merely "further explanation", since the concluding couplet suddenly reverses the neo-Platonism and the substitute nature of earthly love, proclaming the paradox of heaven on earth. In thus forcing a system of philosophy to bow to his mistress Spenser shows no intense spiritual conflict ; he stays, as he intends to stay, within the bounds of graceful, playful tribute. Is there no room in poetry for this? (W. B. C. Watkins)

2

Leave me, O love which reachest but no dust ;
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things ;
Grow rich in that which never taken rust,
Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be ;

Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
O take fast hold ; let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide,
Who seeketh heav'n, and comes of heav'nly breath.
Then farewell, world ; the uttermost I see ;
External Love, maintain thy life in me.

(*Leave Me, O Love* : Sir Philip Sidney).

Critical Appreciation

Though the Christian feeling of the poem has often been noticed, the Christian thought and biblical allusions have not, so far as we know, been made clear. The poem has been associated with Petrarch's "solemn and impressive renunciation of love's empire" and more often with Renaissance Platonism. But these associations are vague and conjectural, while the biblical background of the sonnet is unmistakable and the Christian meaning paramount.

The contrast emphasized throughout the sonnet is between the brevity of the things of this world and the duration of things heavenly. In lines 1-2, the renunciation of earthly love is sufficiently contrasted with the aspiration toward Heavenly Love, despite the generality of "higher things," by the phrase "which reachest but to dust." All the things of this world must pass and return to the dust of which God made man, even the love of a man for a woman. The allusion to *Matthew*, vi, 19—21 in line 3 is apparent. The image of "fading" in line 4 may be suggested by Matthew, vi, 22—24, where the idea of "darkness" is associated with self-seeking and worldliness, and "light" with the steadfast aspiration of the Christian soul toward eternal salvation. This thought is likewise suggested by the first quatrain of Sidney's poem.

"Draw in thy beams......"The association in lines 1—4 of worldly love and its objects with the lustrelessness of that "which moth and rust doth corrupt." of that which "fades" and brings "fading pleasures," may suggest that the mind of the worldly man bent upon worldly pleasures tries to emit its own light (dark though this be in comparison with the light

of God), to live by this false light, competing, as it were, with God's light. The true penitent will want to forsake the feeble "light" of his own mind (which is really the darkness of will-fulness and sin) and will submit himself in all humility to God's light. The act of submission and the accompanying mood of humility are further enforced from two other texts. Jesus said : "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." And Jesus also said : "I am the light of the wrold : he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." The reason for associating "that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be" with the breaking forth of light "that doth both shine and give us sight to see" in lines 6—8 is now clear and indeed compelling. Sidney has brought into conjunction two of the most memorable texts in the Gospels, and they are beautifully consistent with each other. We may then paraphrase lines 5—8 somewhat as follows : Cease to follow the pitiful illumination of your own mind in its world-liness, for its light is but darkness. Submit humbly to the yoke that Jesus lays upon men ; for He has promised that by assuming this yoke you will find the only lasting freedom, freedom to follow the path that leads to eternal life by the light of Jesus who is the light of the world.

"O take fast hold......" Of what ? The answer is, of Christian faith and eternal life. The image is a favourite of St. Paul's though it also occurs elsewhere in the Scriptures. The imagery and allusions of the first two quatrains are all related to the Gospels. In the third quatrain the mood and imagery become predominantly Pauline. The Pauline texts I *Timothy*, vi, 12 and II *Timothy*, vi, 7 suggest the image, in lines 9-10, of the Christian who takes fast hold upon his faith as running a course, a brief course of human life, which only God can light to a successful end. The image of "sliding" in lines 11-12 is not Pauline. The concluding couplet is a prayer to the eternal God who is love ; for it is by the grace of the Eternal Love that the Christian finds salvation.

The sonnet is thus a very careful and beautiful expression of Christian doctrine and Christian feeling. It is an important

commentary upon Sidney's Christian experience and attitude.
(Harold S. Wilson)

3

When to her lute Corinna sings,
Her voice revives the leaden strings,
And doth in highest notes appear
As any challenged echo clear ;
But when she doth of mourning speak,
E'en with her sighs the strings do break.
And as her lute doth live or die,
Led by her passion, so must I :
For when of pleasure she doth sing,
My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring;
But if she doth of sorrow speak,
E'en from my heart the strings do break.

(*Of Corinna's Singing :* Thomas Campion).

Critical Appreciation

One would expect, despite Sidney's notorious defence even of the lyric on moral grounds, that songs would be most likely to show images used simply to assist the representation of a state of mind. This ought to fit love songs at least, which permit "the many moods and pangs of lovers, thoroughly to be discovered". Suppose one reads through Bullen's *Lyrics from Elizabethan Song-Books*, for example, with this natural expectation. One finds few poems which can have been chiefly intended to show us just how their writers felt, and few images which fit in with modern notions of the function of sensuous imagery in lyrics. Interestingly enough, the examples which we believe would come nearest to modern expectations, turns out to be Campion's.

They do not come very near. The climax of "When to her Lute Corrina Sings" is the anouncement "And as her lute doth live or die,/Led her passion, so must I", but Campion leaves to us all particular elucidation of that element of dependence in a lover's state of mind—nor does the poem lead us on to any such private pursuit. He confines himself to an image whose parallelisms can evoke only the most

general notion of speaker's feelings, as though he were interested rather in praise of Corrina neatly elucidated through the parallel he draws. The emotion is so little particularized that Corrina might indeed be the Elizabethan analogue of the latest Carnegie Hall concert sensation, if it were not that we knew enough about the conventions of Elizabethan love poetry to deduce another state of mind in the speaker than musical enthusiasm. The images reveal a man moved, but writing what the rhetorics call "a praise" of the lady and the music, rather than examining the nature of his emotional experience. The ambiguity in "My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring," picking up the suggestions of "Her voice revives the leaden strings," the worn unparticularized image of heart strings (its nature probably governed by the identity of the musical phrase to which lines 6 and 12 were sung), less metrically felicitous than its musical parallel, "Ev'n with her sighs the strings do break"—these do not describe; rather they invest with new interest a perceived analogy, cunningly patterned to make the most of the repeated musical pattern. (Rosemond Tuve)

4

I struck the board, and cried, "No more; I will abroad!
What shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it,
No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted?
All wasted?
Not so, my heart, but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.

Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasure ; leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit and not ; forsake thy cage,
Thy rope and sands,
Which petty thoughts have made ; and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away ! take heed !
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's head there, tie up thy fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load."
But as I raved, and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, "Child" ;
And I replied, "My Lord."

(*The Collar* : George Herbert).

Critical Appreciation

This is not to say that poems have never been composed on lines of imagery laid down in advance. George Herbert surely did it time and again ; and his great poem, *The Collar*, shows how successful this method may be. It is an example of the strictly functional use of images ; their use, that is, to point a theme already defined. The central image, the spiritual rope by which the Christian is tied to his God, would represent an idea so similar to Herbert's contemporaries that the boldest exploration of it could hardly take them far out of their depth. At first Herbert subtly hints at the tie, by seeming to deny its existence :

I struck the board, and cried, "No more ; I will abroad.
What shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free : free as the road
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in the suit?

After that delicate hint, a variation of the theme appears. The Tempter's voice within continues :

> Have I no harvest but a thorn
> To let me blood, and not restore
> What I have lost with cordial fruit?
> Sure there was wine
> Before my sighs did dry it : there was corn
> Before my tears did drown it.

The images are still conventional, symbols only : but notice how cleverly the Tempter has used these Christian symbols, thorn and blood, bread and wine, for his own nefarious purpose! Next, the full theme appears : but the rope between Christ and Christian is diabolically contorted into

> . . . . . .leave thy cold dispute
> Of what is fit, and not ; forsake thy cage,
> Thy rope of sand,
> Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee
> Good cable, to enforce and draw
> And by thy law,
> While thou did'st wink and would'st not see.

Then, with a master stroke of cynicism, the Tempest gives one twist to the rope :

> Call in thy death's head there : tie up thy fears.

But Christ has the last word : and it is consonant with the remarkable dialectic skill and dramatic delicacy of the poem that this last word, for all the still, small voice in which it is spoken, should so strike us as a climax noble, thrilling, unanswerable :

> But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild
> At every word,
> Methought I heard one calling, "Child" ;
> And I replied, "My Lord".

(C. Day Lewis)

5

> So in his purple wrapp'd, receive me, Lord,
> By these his thorns give me his other crown :

And as to others' souls I preach'd thy word,
Be this my text, my sermon to mine own :
Therefore that he may raise, the Lord throws down.
We think that Paradise and Calvary,
Christ's Cross and Adam's tree, stood in one place.
Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me ;
As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,
May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace.

(From *Hymn to God; My God, In My Sickness* : John Donne)

Critical Appreciation

The first five-line stanza is a specific development of what has arleady been implicit in the poem—the unity and beneficence of God's plan. Adam's tree made Christ's Cross necessary, and they stood in one place, because Christ, on the human side, was decended from Adam, in fulfilment of the prophecy that Eve's seed should "bruise the head" of the serpent. The meeting of both Adams in the dying man is made possible only by the last Adam's death upon the cross. But even here, when the body is almost ready to yield completely to spirit, Donne cannot get away from a strong sense of the physical (characteristic of most of his poetry) : "As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face," he says describing the effect of the fever, "May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace."

The next five-line stanza indicates that this prayer has been answered. Wrapped in Christ's purple, he is at last ready to be received into the presence of the Lord. "Purple" here is surely not the regal colour of imperial Rome, which would not be appropriate for Christ even when he sits at the right hand of the Father, but the "purple" which is an incorrect translation of a colour (probably crimson) admired by the ancient Hebrews. "In his purple wrapp'd," then would be similar to "washed in the blood". The suffering of the sick man is analogous also to Christ's crown of thorns, after enduring which he feels that he can plead for the other crown. The poem ends in simple, homely language, justifying the ways of God to man : "Therefore that he may raise, the Lord thrown down".

Donne in this poem uses five-line stanzas of iambic pentameter, rhyming *a b a b b.* The rhymes are sometimes rather loose as, for example, "lie" and "discovery". Trochees are frequently, and dactyls less often, substituted for iambs—trochees like "Whilst my" or "Is the" ; dectyls like the last three syallables of "Cosmographers" or of "Jerusalem". Runover lines allow the pauses to fit the throught rather than the meter. These runover lines and the metrical variations within the iambic-pentameter pattern give the effect of a combination of unity with variety—one aspect of the "reconcilement of discordant equalities, which Coleridge demanded of a poem.

Still another aspect of this *discordia concors* appears in the judicious mingling of simple, homely short words like "What shall my West hurt me ?" with long, sonorous words like "Cosmogra phers," "discovery," "Jerusalem," "evermore," and "resurrection," which is their context add an element of ecclesiastical dignity. More specifically antithetical collection of words appears in "West and East." "Paradise and Calvary," "Christ's cross and Adam's tree," "first Adam" and "last Adam," Thorns" and "crown."

The serenity of Donne's "Hymn" has a different quality from that of other poems on the same subject. The conclusion to "Thanatopsis," for example, attains a certain kind of serenity, and yet Bryant's rhetoric seems almost to shout at us that we should die in a quiet way. Tennyson's limitations we have mentioned. Shakespeare, in a still different way, stresses the horrible aspect of "dusty death" or of flight "from this vile world with vilest worms to dwell." Even the followers of Donne wear the metaphysical shroud with a difference. Bishop King strikes the note of terror in his famous conceit :

> But hark ! my pulse like a soft drum
> Beats my approach, tells thee I come.

Marvell must dwell on his mistress' death, when "worms shall try that long preserved virginity."

Donne, in his valedictory poem at least, certainly has a different emphasis. In view of these poems we can well

believe that the picture of the saintly Donne given by Walton is really not inaccurate for one side of this strange poet-preacher—the side that became more and more uppermost as he grew older. Williamson says that Donne's having his picture painted while he wore his shroud in his last illness indicates morbidity. Perhaps so—but Williamson ought to make a distinction between this kind of morbidity and that which during the greater part of his life kept Donne from "allaying the fever of the bone". Such a fever has in this poem (written at the same time the shroud picture was painted) given way to a joyful contemplation of the central theme of Christian faith : that "death doth touch the resurrection." Such serenity, reached artistically through a combination of religious intensity with metaphysical wit, makes this one of the finest religious poems ever written.

(Harry M. Campbell)

6

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind
  That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
  To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
  The first foe in the field ;
And with a stronger faith embrace
  A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
  As thou too shalt adore :
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
  Loved I not Honour more.

(*To Lucasta, Going To the Wars* : Richard Lovelace)

Critical Appreciation

That Lovelace's Lyric, "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars" has been attractive, there can be no doubt. Its general popularity seems to rest on the epigrammatic quality of its last two lines, considered as a set piece. Without attacking the absurdity of so confined a view of Lovelace's general achieve-

ment it might be useful to indicate the integrated structure of this Lucasta poem, for something of the same benefit which has come from the realization that Donne's poems has more than brilliant opening lines.

Here the poet is presented with a situation, that of the departure from his mistress of a lover called to the wars. The problem of the lover is that of explaining the motivation of his departure and of anticipating the accusation from her that he is both cruel in so doing and inconstant to his earlier vows of fidelity. He wishes to ease the departure by avoiding sentimentality, that is the display of more emotion than the situation warrants. Faced, then, with a quandry, he offers as solution a paradox (a statement seemingly selfcontradictory, though possibly well founded or essentially true).

The interest of the poem comes from his procedure. He opens his address with an epithet of quality ("sweet"), and urges that she need not think him "unkind" (*i.e.* lacking in natural goodness, contrary to nature ; harsh). By his reference to the chaste and sanctified refuge which she provides as though she herself were a nunnery, he establishes the basis on which the problem can be met not basically as a separation of divisible bodies but as one of indivisible spirit. The path of solution is commonplace in a love poetry ; the quality of Lovelace's poem arises out of his particular twist to it.

The ambiguity and paradox of the situation is affirmed by the twisted implicatious of "To war and arms I fly," which so obviously picks up the martial "*Arma virumque Cano*" of Virgil. Foreseeing a potential misunderstanding that his true delight will lie in war, the poet proceeds to her expected implication of shifted allegiance, and maintains continuity in the role of a lover, as one might with apparent inconstancy leave from a quarrel to pursue the first girl one saw. But any conflicting passion on the level of the flesh is, as he presents the case, subtly omitted, since he does not actually embrace this new mistress, but only his martial accoutrements ; and this he does only with "faith," which is non-sensory. This may paradoxically still seem inconstant and inconsistent until we actually understand the nature of the other love. This we

"Honour," a concept of the spirit and not of the body, therefore essentially sexless and genderless, in a situation mutually attractive ("as thou too shalt adore"). Their common adoration of "Honour" is a bond between them of ultimate timelessness, overcoming distance and decay, as "the marriage of true minds" does for Shakespeare, and lunary love (by extension to the compass) does for Donne. Since Lovelace now openly avows his love of Honour, by implication of affinity he pays his mistress the ultimate compliment of extending this inherent superiority to his relationship with her. Any unkindness in his departure can be said to exist only on the sub-lunary level of flesh. It cannot be unnatural except on that plane, and the inconsistancy will be resolved by her recognition of the hierarchy of affections, on a higher level of which comes Honour. Perhaps the fullest value of the poem is indicated in the increased density which his final epithet of endearment bears over that of his initial one; for the progress from his opening address to her as "sweet" to that of "dear" cumulatively carries with it, under the circumstances, a final assessment not only of quality but also of value, and of flesh immortalized by ascending spirit.

If there is a question as to the actuality of a shift of tone from beginning to end, one needs only to attempt a simple substitution to understand the incongruity of the alternative:

> I could not love thee (sweet) so much,
> Loved I not Honour more.

(Norman Holmes Pearson)

7

> Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
> In the forests of the night,
> What immortal hand or eye
> Could frame thy fearful symmetry?
> In what distant deeps or skies
> Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
> On what wings dare he aspire?
> What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart ?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand ? and what dread feet ?
What the hammer ? what the chain ?
In what furnace was thy brain ?
What the anvil ? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp ?
When the stars threw down their spears
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see ?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee ?
Tiger ! Tiger ! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry ?

(*The Tiger* : William Blake)

Critical Appreciation

The poetry of this desire and of what it meant to Blake can be seen in "The Tiger". Here enraptured song conveys in essential vision some themes which Blake presents elsewhere in more detail. This is the pure poetry of his trust in cosmic force. The images of "The Tiger" recur in the prophetic books, but in the poem, detached from any very specific context, they have a special strength and freedom. The tiger is Blake's symbol for the fierce forces in the soul which are needed to break the bonds of experience. The "forests of the night," in which the tiger lurks, are ignorance, repression, and superstition. It has been fashioned by unknown, supernatural spirits, like Blake's mythical heroes, Orc and Los, prodigious smiths who beat out living worlds with their hammer; and this happened when "the stars threw down their spears," that is, in some enormous cosmic crisis when the universe turned round in its course and began to move from light to darkness—as Urizen says in *The Four Zoas*, when he finds that passion and natural joy have withered under his rule and the power of the spirit has been weakened :

I went not forth : I hid myself in black clouds of my wrath ;
I call'd the stars around my feet in the night of councils dark ;
The stars threw down their spears and fled naked away.

If we wish to illustrate "The Tiger" from Blake's other works, it is easy to do so, and it adds much to our understanding of its background and its place in Blake's development. But it is first and last a poem. The images are so compelling that for most purposes they explain themselves, and we have an immediate, overwhelming impression of an awful power lurking in the darkness of being and forcing on us questions which pierce to the heart of life.

(C. M. Bowra)

8

Ye flowery banks O' bonie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair ?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I saw fu' o' care ?
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings upon the bough ;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause luve was true !
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate ;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate !
Aft hae I roved by bonie Doon
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightstome heart I pu'd a rose
Fare aff its throny tree ;
And my fause luver staw my rose,
But left the thron wi' me.

(*Ye Flowery Banks* : Robert Burns)

Critical Appreciation

The instinctive singers have their own ways of compelling complex states of consciousness in short lyrics. As a final example, we might choose a song by Burns. The worn word "little" of the third line suggests in its context a complex state of mind—an expectation of sympathy, a sense of tenderness and sentience in all nature. The fifth line is probably the finest poetically. Burns thought so, for he repeated it. If the poem had gone no further than

> Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,

its complexity would already have attained expression through suggestion and inference. The reminder merely keeps the emotion of heartbreak before us by giving in more detail its cause. Yet how this complexity is achieved is hard to determine. One remembers another poet who expressed anguish, listening to the song of a bird, and who kept that anguish before his readers by dwelling upon its sources. Keats says, "my heart aches"; Burns, "Thou'll break my heart". The difference between ache and break and the efficacy of each word in its respective poem are almost sufficient proofs of the complexity of poetry. Keats in the "Ode to a Nightingale" goes on :

> 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
> But being too happy in thy happiness.

The idea of the painful transiency of beauty and joy, filling so many of Keats's best poems, here explains his heartache.

Burns's heartbreak, on the other hand, rises not from passing ecstasy but from contrasting moods and times ; and although he takes the rest of the poem for amplification, he has already made the antithesis in the first stanza between nature's freshness and his own heaviness (or the heaviness of the girl who perhaps is speaking the poem). Although Burns's lyric centres on a single emotion, that emotion is not simple ; furthermore, it is held before the reader not by appealing directly to his emotions, but by presenting pictures and situations to the senses and assuming that their logical relations will be understood.

The contrast in the first stanza is between the external joy of flowers and birds and the internal care of the poet. In the second and third stanzas, the joy of nature is associated with the past joy of the poet, so that the contrast develops into an opposition between past happiness and present unhappiness. The theme becomes :

> That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering
> happier things.

The dominant emotion of the poem, therefore, depends upon the interplay between two other emotions—delight in love and anguish at betrayal. The heartbreak would not be so sharp if past joy had never been experienced. Stanza four extends the poet's (or the girl's) past happiness through time and nature and makes it more nearly universal, so that the painful emotion of the moment seems more nearly unbearable; the whole contrast is crystallized in the final stanza, no longer in terms of time, but of space, by the image of the rose and the thorn.

A rose is love : a thorn is betrayal, deceit, falsity, and anguish. If one accepts for poetry the laws of concreteness and of significance, poetry is inevitably complex. That is to say, a poem will handle the visibles and tangibles of the world; it will be seeking general significances At the very least, then, poetry is complex to the extent that it presents idea in terms of things. The statements of poetry convey their deepest significance obliquely, indirectly. Such poetic thought—and it cannot be simple—is so much a part of us that we must consider closely before we realize that no bonny bird smaller that a vulture could literally break Burn's heart ; that we are not supposed to take as an historical fact Burns's plucking a rose which later the false lover stole ; that in finding spiritual equivalents for the stealing of a rose and the leaving of the thorn experience almost forces us to think of the poem as spoken by a girl ; and that dramatic imagination on Burns's part, rather than actual belief, leads him to suggest that flowers should cease to bloom and birds to sing when he is full of care.

(Donald A. Stauffer)

9

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils ;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay :
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves besides them danced ; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee :
A poet could not be gay
In such a jocund company :
I gazed—and gazed but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought :
For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
The flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* : William Wordsworth)

The function of the Imagination, as Wordsworth and Coleridge insisted, is, at the first level, to make sense out of the differentiated manifold of sensation by organizing it into individual objects or things ; at the second, and specifically poetic, level, to reshape this world of common perception of a unity that shall be even more satisfactory and meaningful. Dorothy has made extensive use of the secondary or poetic imagination. Notice the devices by which she has unified and made sense of the experience of the daffodils. First, and most important, she has endowed them with human qualities. They are a social group engaged in busy, concerted activity.

The notion of the social group, the crowd (she does not actually use the word) is reinforced by her further figure of strugglers. Secondly, besides being active, the crowd of daffodils is happy : they look gay, they toss and reel and dance (their very activity is sport) and seem verily to laugh. And thirdly, some of the crowd have danced so hard that they are tired : they rest their heads upon the stones as on pillows.

Wordsworth recollected the scene in tranquillity and wrote his poem a full two years afterwards. He fixes on Dorothy's fine central perceptions of "the simplicity, unity, and life of that one busy highway," and condenses it into the one word "crow". He takes over, too, her impression that the daffodils were "dancing", that they were "gay", that they were even "laughing". Even since 1807, when Wordsworth published this poem, daffodils have danced and laughed, but there is nothing inevitable about it. The Greek myth of Narcissus is not exactly hilarious ; and even Herrick, when he looked at a daffodil, saw something far from jocund :

> When a Daffodil I see
> Hanging down his head t'wards me,
> Guesse I may, what I must be :
> First, I shall decline my head :
> Secondly, I shall be dead ;
> Lastly, safely buryed.

The literal, positivistic, "scientific" fact was that Wordsworth and his sister saw a large bed of wild daffodils beside a lake, agitated by a strong, cold spring wind. The rest is all the work of the imagination.

The mark of the poetic imagination is to simplify : to make the manifold of sensation more meaningful by reducing it to a number of objects which can actually be contemplated. Wordsworth continues Dorothy's process of simplification : he eliminates the bitterness of the wind, which is so prominent in her account ; reduces the wind, in fact to a breeze. It may appear here that he has simplified more than was necessary or wise. Shakespeare, in the most famous lines veer written about daffodils, kept the wind :

Daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The wind of March with beauty.

Admittedly, it is a higher mode. Wordsworth, on some occasions, would have kept the wind, too ; but to have kept it here would have made a more complex—if you will, a more tragic—poem than he felt like writing. He felt this poem as something very simple and very pure ; when he came to publish it, he put it in a group called "Moods of My Own Mind." But he is impartial ; as he throws out matter on the one hand because it is too serious, so he eliminates matter on the other because it is too playful. The prettiest thing in Dorothy's realization—her image of the daffodils pillowing their heads on the stones—drops out. He dispenses too with Dorothy's stragglers. He feastens on her central image of the dancing, laughing crowd, and lets everything else go.

But now the idea of the crowd calls for a modification, and a modification of a fundamental sort. The social glee of the crowd can be made a more significant situation. The solitariness of the poet and the socialiblity of the daffodils are set up as poles between which the poem discharges itself. I have said that the situation is for him a promising one. Everyone knows of Wordsworth's love of solitude, his conviction that the highest experiences came to him when he was alone. When we need constantly to remind ourselves of is that this theory assigned an only slightly lower value to the love of men in societies. (The sub-title of Book VIII of "The Prelude" is "Love of Nature Leading to Love of Mankind.") The trouble was that, though he had the best of intentions, he could never handle close-packed, present, human crowds in the mode of Imagination. If he were to grasp the life of a great city imaginatively, it had to be at night or early in the morning, while the streets were deserted ; or at least in bad weather, when few people were abroad.

But in the figure of a bed of daffodils endowed with human characteristics, he can handle with feelings of approval and exhilaration the concept of a crowd, of ten thousand individuals packed close together. He begins and ends solitary at the

beginning, we may assume filled with joy, but a joy somewhat solemn, somewhat cold and remote, as the symbol of the cloud indicates. He is surprised by the sensation of mere unmixed human gaiety and light-heartedness, yields to it, and finds it good; so good that ever after he can derive refreshment from the memory of the experience.

The progress towards explicit identification of the symbol is gradual. In the first stanza the flowers are "fluttering" (literal : the flowers are moved by the breeze) : then "dancing" (the flowers are self-moved). By the end of the second stanza they are "tossing their heads in sprightly dance." (The flowers are self-moved and are having a wonderful time. "Dance" is the key-word ; it occurs in either the last or the first line of each stanza.) Finally, but not till the third stanza is reached, we get the quite explicit series "glee", "gay", "jocund", "pleasure". Wordsworth is always (or almost always) explicit in this fashion : he tells you just how you are expected to take his figures. Of course it is the figures that do the work. No one can make us joyful by merely using the word "joy" or any of its synonyms. But there is impressive agreement among readers of all periods that by giving us a simple figure, reinforcing it by certain devices of varied iteration, and explicitly interpreting it, Wordsworth does evoke the emotion of joy.

We can now see what Wordsworth meant by looking steadily at his subject. So far as his subject is expressed in imagery drawn from nature (and that means in all his best poetry), there is implied a lifelong habit of close, detailed, and accurate observation of the objects composing the external universe. By "accurate" I mean something the same thing as "naturalistic", but not entirely so. Wordsworth scorned the merely analytic vision of the naturalist ("one that would peep and botanize upon his mother's grave"), because in his opinion that kind of apprehension empties the object of life and meaning by detaching it from its ground. "His theme is nature in solido", as Whitehead pointed out, "that is to say, he dwells on that mysterious presence of surrounding things, which imposes itself on any separate element that we set up as an individual for its own sake. He always grasps the whole

of nature as involved in the tonality of the particular." But, except for those portions of the scientist's vision which require (let us say) dissection and magnification, there is little in the scientist's vision that Wordsworth misses. A merely matter-of-fact, an exclusively positivistic view of nature fills him with anger, but his own apprehension includes the matter-of-fact view without denying any of it. Dr. Leavis has perhaps put this more intelligibly when he remarks, as the chief virtue of Wordsworth's poetry, a "firm hold upon the world of common in perception which has been common in Western civilization since some time in the late eighteenth century." In a literal, physiological sense, Wordsworth did look steadily at the natural objects that appear in his poetry.

(Fredrick A. Pottle)

10

How do I love thee ? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace,
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right ;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life !—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

(*Sonnet from the Portuguese,* XLIII—Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

Critical Appreciation

"How do I love thee ?" is a theme on which both Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Goneril, daughter of Lear, expressed themselves in pentameters—with certain recognizable similarities. Goneril says (King Lear, I, i, 56-62) :

Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour

E.B.B. says (*Sonnet from the Portuguese*, XLIII):

I love thee to the depth and breadth at height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace......
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

There is a notable insistence on spaciousness in each protestation; Goneril disdains even the rich and rare, and E.B.B. conspicuously selects intangibles to express degree; both find a measure in Grace; and presumably striving for Right and turning from Praise are the equivalent of honour. Health and beauty are perhaps a bit more pretentious than "the level of every day's/Most quiet need." But Goneril loves "As much as child e'er loved", and E.B.B., "with my childhood's faith." Goneril's love "makes breath poor and speech unable"; E.B.B. loves "with the breath/Smiles, tears of all my life! and anticipates loving "better after death". Goneril likewise hyperbolizes; she loves "more than words can wield the matter" and "Beyond all matter of so much....."

Goneril wished to give the unperceptive Lear an impression of sincerity; E.B.B., no doubt, looked in her heart and wrote. Yet, except for a detail or two added by E.B.B., both said much the same thing. What comes out of this is a lesson in verse-technique: the piling up of abstractions and only carry conviction but gives a positive effect of insincerity. E.B.B.'s sonnet is as embarrassing as all platform rhetoric; she can find no images to realize, to prove her experience. Ironically, she relies upon personal sincerity to give body to her words, whereas Goneril relies upon comparable words to suggest a body of sincerity. Shakespeare succeeded in his intention, for Goneril took in only Lear; in days of sharp awareness of poetic techniques, E.B.B. should not be taking in anybody. Shakespeare's method in Goneril's speech underlines a basic tenet of modern poetic criticism.

With the gusty protestations quoted above, compare Cordelia's single image and understatement (with the real emphasis ironically concealed in bond, a word which Lear fails entirely to understand) :

I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth : I love your majesty
According to my bond......

Shakespeare knew precisely what kind of language to use for each sister. E.B.B. could have learned from him.

(Robert B. Heilman)

11

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earlier pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more !

(*Tears, Idle Tears* : Alfred, Lord Tennyson).

Critical Appreciation

Any account of the poem may very well begin with a consideration of the nature of the tears. Are they idle tears ? Or are they not rather the most meaningful of tears? Does not the very fact that they are "idle" (that is, tears occasioned by no immediate grief) become in itself a guarantee of the fact that they spring from a deeper, more universal cause ?

It would seem so, and that the poet is thus beginning his poem with a paradox. For the third line of the poem indicates that there is no doubt in the speaker's mind about the origin of the tears in some divine despair. They "rise in the heart"—for all that they have been first announced as 'idle'.

But the question whether Tennyson is guilty of (or to be complimented upon) a use of paradox may well wait upon further discussion. At this point in our commentary, it is enough to observe that Tennyson has chosen to open his poem with some dramatic boldness—it not with the bold step of equating "idle" with "from the depth of some divine despair," then at least with a bold and violent reversal of the speaker's first characterization of his tears.

The tears "rise in the heart" as the speaker looks upon a scene of beauty and tranquillity. Does looking on the "happy Autumn-fields" bring to mind the days that are no more ? The poet does not say so. The tears rise to the eyes in looking on the happy "Autumn-fields" and thinking on the days that are no more. The poet himself does not stand responsible for any closer linkage between these actions, though, as a matter of fact, most of us will want to make a closer linkage here. For, if we change "happy Autumn-fields," say, to "happy April-fields", the two terms tend to draw apart. The fact that the fields are Autumn-fields which, though happy, point back to something which is over—which is finished—does connect them with the past, therefore properly suggests to the observer thoughts about that past.

The past is fresh as with a dawn freshness—as fresh as the first beam glittering on the sail of an incoming ship. The

ship is evidently expected; it brings friends, friends "up from the underworld." On the surface, the comparison is innocent: the "underworld" is merely the antipodes, the world which lies below the horizon—an underworld in the sense displayed in old-fashioned geographies with their sketches illustrating the effects of the curvature of the earth. The sails, which catch the light and glitter, will necessarily be the part first seen of any ship which is coming "up" over the curve of the earth.

But the word "underworld" will necessarily suggest the realm of the shades, the abode of the dead. The attempt to characterize the freshness of days that are no more has, thus, developed, almost imperceptibly, into a further characterization of the days themselves as belonging, not to our day-light world but to an "underworld". This suggestion is, of course, strengthened in the lines that follow in which the ship metaphor is reversed so as to give us a picture of sadness: evening, the last glint of sunset light on the sail of a ship.

> That sinks with all we love below the verge...

The conjunction of the qualities of sadness and freshness is reinforced by the fact that the same basic symbol—the light on the sails of a ship hull down—has been employed to suggest both qualities. With the third stanza, the process is carried one stage further: the two qualities (with the variant of "strange" for "fresh") are explicitly linked together:

> Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns...

And here the poet is not content to suggest the qualities of sadness and strangeness by means of two diffident, even if closely related, figures. In this third stanza the special kind of sadness and strangeness is suggested by one and the same figure.

It is a figure developed in some detail. It, too, involves a dawn scene, though ironically so, for the beginning of the new day is to be the beginning of the long night for dying man. The dying eyes, the poem suggests, have been for some time awake—long enough to have had time to watch the

> casement slowly (grow) a *glimmering square*...

The dying man, soon to sleep the lasting sleep is more fully awake than the "half-awaken'd birds" whose earliest pipings come to his dying ears. We know why these pipings are sad ; but why are they strange ? Because to the person hearing a bird's song for the last time, it will seem that he has never before really heard one. The familiar sound will take on a quality of unreality—of strangeness.

The ironic contrast, too, accounts for the sense of desperation which runs through the concluding lines of the poem. The kisses feigned by "hopeless fancy" are made the more precious because of the very hopelessness ; but memory takes on the quality of fancy. It is equally hopeless—the kisses can as little be renewed as those "feign'd on lips that are for others" can be obtained. The realized past has become as fabulous as the unrealizable future. The days that are no more are as dear as the one, as sweet as the other, the speaker says, and it does not matter whether we compare them to the one or to the other or the both : it comes to the same thing.

But the days that are no more are not merely "dear" and "sweet" ; they are "deep" and "wild". Something has happened to the grammar here. How can the days be "deep love" or "wild with all regret" ? And what is the status of the exclamation "O Death in Life" ? Is it merely a tortured cry like "O God ! the days that are no more" ? Or is it a loose appositive : "the days that are no more are a kind of death in life" ?

The questions are not asked in a censorious spirit, as if there was no justification for Tennyson's licence here. But it is important to see how much licence the poem requires, and the terms on which the reader decides to accord it justification. What one finds on closer examination is not muddlement but richness. But it is a richness achieved through principles of organization which many an admirer of the poet has difficulty in allowing to the "obscure" modern poet.

For example, how can the days of the past be deep ? Here, of course, the problem is not very difficult. The past is buried within one : the days that are no more constitute

the deepest level of one's being, and the tears that arise from thinking on them may be said to come from the "depth of some divine despair". But how can the days be "wild with all regret" ? The extension demanded here is more ambitious. In matter of fact, it is the speaker, the man, who is made wild with regret by thinking on the days.

(Cleanth Brooks)

12

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things ;
There is no armour against Fate
Death lays his icy hand on kings ;
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.
Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill ;
But their strong nerves at last must yield ;
They tame but one another still ;
Early or late,
They stoop to fate
And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death.
The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast on more your mighty deeds ;
Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds :
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb ;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blosson in the dust.

(James Shirley : *The Glories of Our Blood and State*)

Critical Appreciation.

No one disputes the fact that great and obscure alike must die, the value of this poem is to be found in the rich associa-

tions. It is didactic in tone, but this richness prevents it from being flat and dull as didactic poetry often is. Although it is on a solemn subject, the inevitability of death, 'the paths of glory lead but to the grave', some of the ambiguities are humorous, like Donne's holy puns. Though a minor poem, it is a mature one.

The form is fairly simple : an iambic treatment quatrain rhyming *ab ab* is followed by an iambic dimeter couplet and an iambic treatment couplet. The two dimeters lighten the lyric and make it natural that it should be set to music and sung ; it is, indeed, a true lyric, for it comes from a play in which it was sung. The large number of long vowels would help the singer. The rhymes are all monosyllabic full rhymes and need no comment ; there are no internal rhymes. There is considerable trochaic counterpoint, which saves the rhymes and need no comment ; there are no internal rhymes. There is considerable trochaic counterpoint, which saves the rhythm from being too ponderous : inversions of the first foot are found in lines 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 20, and 23, with weak first feet in lines 3, 7, 8, 16, 19, and 22. In the tetameter lines, inversion of the secoud foot is found in line 19, inversion of the third foot nowhere, but a weak second foot in lines 1 and 2, and a weak third foot in lines 3, 12, 17 and 23 a strong second foot in lines 8, 10, 11, and a rather strong fourth foot in the very heavy line 11. In the dimeter lines of the poem inversions already mentioned lighted the poem more than those in the tetrameter lines, being proportionately more noticeable

A paraphrase of the poem would suggest that the content, though hardly trivial, is so obvious as to be scarcely worth twenty-four lines of painstaking and musical verse : 'Earthly distinction is unreal, being ended by death, which is as inevitable for a king as for an agricultural labourer. Warriors may gain fame by killing, but are themselves overcome by death. Fame is transient, victors are victims, all are mortal ; only good actions survive after death'. In fact, the poem says rather more than this.

The extremely concrete imagery strengthens the poem and helps to make it more than tedious moralizing on a pla-

titude. Even rank becomes 'blood' (usually a disturbing word); there is no 'armour' to protect us from our fate and the hand of death is 'icy'—a real hand; regality is portrayed as 'sceptre and crown and these representative objects do not 'fall' but, more brutally and in homely language, 'tumble', which suggests the weakness and helplessness of childhood. The poor man is not a vague 'shepherd swain' but as typified by his 'scythe and spade'; Fame is laurel and a literal 'garland'; since the 'garland' is real it must soon 'wither'. The actions of the just are flowers that 'smell sweet'.

The altar of death is 'purple', catching up the colours of both 'blood' and 'state', and the 'cold tomb' reminds us of the 'icy hand' of death. This 'catching up' of images as a jewel at the throat may catch up the glitter of a shoe buckle, is one of the most artistic features of this poem. Sceptre, Crown, scythe, spade, are laid equal in the dust; but it is also in the dust that the actions of the just blossom. The 'poor crooked scythe' leads on to those who, less harmlessly, 'reap' the field with swords—a truly horrible metaphor, if we visualize it at all clearly. We think it likely that Shirley takes advantage here of the association of the scythe with both Time and Death, and may possibly also be thinking of the scythes on the wheels of ancient British chariot, which most horribly 'reaped the field'. The laurels planted by warriors on the field manured with blood (I think we are meant to understand line 10 in this brutal way; blood is good manure for the laurels of military fame) catch up the garlands on the brows of conquerors and are contrasted with the flowers of the actions of the just; the flowers smell sweet; blood and laurels both have an unpleasant smell.

The actions of the just are presented as some loved, unobtrusive flower such as the violet. There is a subtle use of associations in the use of garlands and laurels as a symbol for the wrong kind of fame and the use of captives led to the altar as a symbol for death. For sacrificial victims are garlanded:

> To what green altar, O mysterious priest,

Lead'st thou that heifer lowing to the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed ?
(Keats : *Ode on a Grecian Urn*)

There is thus a hint that in acquiring laurels the warriors are really preparing themselves for the sacrificial altar. 'Purple', too, is associated with royal and triumphal robes as well as with blood ; the sound-echo in 'victor-victim' and even the brilliant use of 'blood' in the first line all help to build us a half-conscious acceptance of an actual equating of fame with death. It is a wonderful piece of virtuosity in the handling of associations and ambiguous words. We may also be meant to think of the wreaths used at funerals.

This seems at first sight a rather ordinary poem, and we wonder why it moves and haunts us until we begin to analyse these cross-current.

13

Because I coud not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me ;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And immortality.
We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labour, and my leisure too,
For his civility.
We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring ;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.
We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground ;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.
Since then 'tis centuries ; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

(*The Chariot* : Emily Dickinson)

Critical Appreciation

One of the perfect poems in English is *The Chariot*, and it exemplifies better than anything else (Emily Dickinson) wrote the special quality of her mind. I think it will illuminate the tendency of this discussion. If the word 'great' means anything in poetry, this poem is one of the greatest in the English language ; it is flawless to the last detail. The rhythm charges with movement the pattern of suspended action back of the poem. Every image is precise and, moreover, not merely beautiful but inextricably fused with the central idea. Every image extends and intensifies every other. The third stanza especially shows Miss Dickinson's power to fuse, into a single order of perception, a heterogeneous series : the children, the grain, and the setting sun (time) have the same degree of credibility ; the first subtly preparing for the last. The sharp gazing before gain instils into nature a kind of cold vitality of which the qualitative richness has infinite depth. The content of death in the poem eludes for ever any explicit definition. He is a gentleman taking a lady out for a drive. But note the restraint that keeps the poet from carrying this so far that it is ludicrous and incredible ; and note the subtly interfused erotic motive, which the idea of death has presented to every romantic poet, love being a symbol interchangeable with death. The terror of death is objectified through this figure of the genteel driver, who is made ironically to serve the end of Immortality. This is the heart of the poem : she has presented a typical Christian theme in all its final irresolution, without making any final statement about it. There is no solution to the problem ; there can be only a statement of it in the full context of intellect and feeling. A construction of the human will, elaborated with all the abstracting powers of the mind, is put to the concrete test of experience : the idea of immortality is confronted with the fact of physical disintegration. We are not told what to think ; we are told to look at the situation.

The framework of the poem is, in fact, the two abstractions, mortality and eternity, which are made to associate in perfect equality with the images : she sees the ideas, and thinks

of the perceptions. She did, of course, nothing of the sort; but we must use the logical distinctions, even to the extent of paradox, if we are to form any notion of this rare quality of mind. She could not in the proper sense think at all, and unless we prefer the feeble poetry of moral ideas that flourished in New England in the eighties, we must conclude that her intellectual deficiency contributed at least negatively, to her great distinction. Miss Dickinson is probably the only Anglo-American poet of her century whose work exhibits the perfect literary situation—in which is possible the fusion of sensibility and thought. Unlike her contemporaries, she never succumbed to her ideas, to ease solutions, to her private desires. (Allen Tate).

14

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though ;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.
He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
To only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and down flake.
The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

(*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* : Robert Frost).

Critical Appreciation.

The poem began with what was the actual experience of stopping at night by some dark woods in winter, and the fact that there were two horses. He remembered what he saw then. "The steaming horses think it queer". But the poem

needs truth more than fact, and he cancels the line, and begins again. "The horse begins to think it queer," but doesn't like the word "begins", needing in the allowed space a word that will particularize the horse, so writes, "The little hours must think it queer". Now he runs into a grammatical difficulty, which must somehow be solved before he gets on into the poem he already feels sure of. "I launched into the construction 'My little horse must think it queer that we should stop'. I didn't like omitting the 'that' and I had no room for 'should'. I had the luck to get out of it with the infinitive". This groping and warming-up has a kind of impatience, an urgency to get on with the poem, but not until all the parts are right. At this point the poet knew and did not know how the poem would end. He knew the feel, and the sense, and almost everything about the form—certainly enough to know when he got off the track.

Whether he revised the third line here or later we cannot know. But we can see in several places in this poem his changes toward particularization. The line "Between a forest and a lake" is a notation, and "Between the woods and frozen lake" is definite, and bounded ; you get lost in a forest, but you can walk through and out of the woods, and probably you know who owns it—Vermonters do, as he has said in the first stanza. "A lake" has not the specific condition or picture of "frozen lake". This sort of revision, or what Frost calls, "touching up", is what makes a poem—this, plus the first inspiration. Either one, without the other, unlikely to make a good poem.

The next stanza comes easier, because the rhyme-scheme has been determined, and one unexpected obstacle has been overcome. But once more there is a delay, as the poet makes a decision as to the "he" or "she"—and the more important and more interesting about the falling show. In writing "downy flake" for "fall of flake" the gain is great not only for accuracy of feeling and fact but also for the music of fervour of the lines. The simple alliteration in "fall of flake" is cancelled in the word, one word, "downy", which blends with the vowel chords a poet half-consciously makes and modulates as he goes. In this instance, it half-chimes

with "sounds" and adds a rounder, fuller, and yet quieter tone.

Now the carry-over rime is "sweep", a fortunate one really, and important to the final solution of the rhyme-scheme. It is not too much to assume, knowing all we know about the circumstances of the writing of this poem—the all-night composition of "New Hampshire", and the sudden urge to catch and shape still another saved idea—that the darker, more confident, more rapid strokes of the pen, show the poet's growing excitement. The end is in his sight. The thing he believed could happen, will happen, surely now and he must hurry to get it into the page. This is the real moment of power, and any poet's greatest satisfaction.

"The woods are lovely dark and deep But I have promises to keep". The first two lines of the last stanza come fast, and flow beautifully, the crest of the poem's emotion and music. We cannot know whether he had held them in his head, or had swept up to and into them as he felt she destined pattern fulfilling itself.

Then, with success in sight, there comes an awkward and unexpected stumble. He writes, "That bid give the reins a shake", which may have been the fact and the action. But the rhyme is wrong. Not only has the rhyme been used in the previous stanza but so has image of the horse shaking his head and reins. Things are moving fast now, no doubt impatiently, but certainly with determination, shown in the heavy black lines of abrupt cancellation. He strikes out "me give the reins a shake", and writes above it, so the lines will read, "That bid me on, and there are miles", and then the whole thing comes through ? Of course ! "Miles to go........."

That's what it was supposed to be—the feeling of silence and dark, almost overpowering the man, but the necessity of going on. "And miles to go before I sleep". Then the triumph in the whole thing, the only right and perfect last line, solving the problem of the carried-over rhyme, keeping the half-tranced state, and the dark, and the solitude, and man's great effort to be a responsible man......the repetition of that line.

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" can be studied as perfected structure, with the photostat manuscript to show that art is not, though it must always appear to be, effortless. It can be thought of as a picture : the whites, grays, and blacks of the masses and areas of lake, field, and woods, with the tiny figure of the man in the sleigh, and the horse. And it can be thought of as a statement of man's everlasting responsibility to man ; though the dark and nothingness tempt him to surrender, he will not give in. It is interesting to compare this poem with two later pieces of Frost's in which he uses the Dame image "Desert Places", and "Come In", none alike, all on the first level of his poetry, and all three built on the image of the pull of wildness and lawlessness against man's conscious will and the promises he has made to be kept.

(John Holmes).

15

Here lies a lady of beauty and high degree.
Of chills and fever she died, of fever and chills,
The delight of her husband, her aunts, an infant of three.
And of medicos marveling sweetly on her ills.
For either she burned, and her confident eyes would blaze,
And her fingers fly in a manner to puzzle their heads—
What was she making ? Why, nothing ; she sat in a maze
Of old scraps of laces, snipped into curious shreds.
Or this would pass, and the light of her fire decline
Till she lay discouraged and cold as a thin stalk white and blown,
And would not open her eyes, to kisses, to wine.
The sixth of these states was her last ; the cold settled down.
Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom, and toughly I hope ye may thole,
But was she not lucky ? In flowers and lace and mourning,

In love and great honour we bade God rest her soul
After six little spaces of chill, and six of burning.
(*Here Lies a Lady* : John Crowe Ransom).

Critical Appreciation

The most controversial feature of this poem is the attitude of the speaker toward the artistocratic lady who has died. The tone of the opening line is detached and factual. As we read further, however, we realize that this objectivity is owing not to lack of feeling but to the kind of feeling—or rather, to a blend of several feelings : (1) genuine sorrow included by this lady's death, (2) respect for the values cherished by all ladies of high degree, and (3) at the same time an awareness that these values can be seen as superficial, even mildly comical.

Genuine grief is reflected in his tribute to the affection the lady inspired in her husband, aunts, and child, in the pathos of the image of the "thin stalk white and blown" in the rhetorical grimness of the words, "the cold settled down," and in his report that "in love and great honour we bade God rest her soul."

The poem's central focus, however, is on his appreciation of the values to which all aristocratic ladies adhere : their love of manners, ceremony, and behaviour that is controlled, self-conscious, formally patterned. Such ladies put a great premium on lace and fine dress : they delight in symmetry and balance, neatness and precision. And what most impresses the speaker in the poem is the ceremonious way—the almost mannered way—in which she has died. The symmetrical pattern of her chills and fever is emphasized by the repetition, with inversion, in the second line, by the nicely balanced organization of the poem itself (with the second stanza devoted to her fevers and the third to her chills), and by the last line of the poem. In the fourth stanza the speaker says that he hopes sweet ladies will not die ; but if they must die, he hopes their dying may be as appropriate as hers. The question in the second line of this stanza is not completely ironic. It one special sense the lady was lucky : not only because her friends and neighbours paid their respects in an elaborately ceremonious funeral (with flowers,

lace, mourning, love, great honour, and prayer) but also because of the way in which she died, "after six little spaces of chill, and six of burning". Her illness, although tragic, was nevertheless symmetrical ; and it was orderly, neat and precise in form. Hence the lady's sickness is presented as a symbol of her whole set of values (her "art of living") ; her way of death symbolizes her way of life.

There are two ways of reacting to this symbolical death ; you can respect it, or you can find it rather silly. Evidence of the speaker's basic attitude—genuine respect—has already been cited ; but there is also evidence of his awareness that others might find all these going on rather comically,—that others might, indeed, find the lady's death, like her life, mildly ridiculous. There is the jauntry rhythm of line 2, written as though the speaker, intrigued by the very sounds of "chills and fever, fever and chills," playfully makes the illness sound like a jig ; there is a comic tumbling down the scale of importance from the husband in line 3 to the smiling incompetent medicos of line 4 ; there is a touch of grim humour in the description of her fevers ("What was the making ? Why nothing?"); and there is implied comedy in the very conception of her disease as a piece of complicated ritual. These occasional light touches in the speaker's manner or pose (as distinct from his basic feeling) do not satirize the lady, but they do enable the speaker to suggest that he knows there can be other attitudes than his own ; he says, in effect : "Despite my genuine grief and my deep respect for the lady's values, I understand that it might be possible to regard the lady as an inconsequential creature whose death was as cluttered with pointless activity as her life had been."

(Fred H. Stocking)

16

I saw the sky descending, black and white,
Not blue, on Boston where the winters wore
The skulls to jack-o' lanterns on the slates,
And Hunger's skin-and-bone retrievers tore
The chickadee and shrike. The thorn tree waits
Its victim and tonight
The worms will eat the deadwood to the foot
Of ararat : the scythers, Time and Death,

Helmeted elocusts, move upon the tree of breath ;
The wild ingrafted olive and the root
Are withered, and a winter drifts to where
The Pepperpot, ironic rainbow, spans
Charles River and its scales of scorched-earth miles
I saw my city in the Scales; the pans
Of judgment rising and desecnding Piles
Of dead leaves char the air—
And I am a red arrow on this graph
Of Revelations. Every dove is sold.
The Chapel's sharp-shinned eagle shifts its hold
On serpent-Time, the rainbow's epitaph.
In Boston serpents whistle at the cold.
The victim climbs the altar steps and sings :
"Hosannah to the lion, lamb, and beast
Who fans the furnace-face of IS with wings ;
I breathe the ether of my marriage feast."
At the high altar, gold
And a fai'r cloth. I knee and the wings beat
My cheek. What can the dove of Jesus give
You now but wisdom, ends ? Stand and live,
The dove has brought an olive branch to eat.

(*Where the Rainbow Ends* : Robert Lowell)

Critical Appreciation

"Where the Rainbow Ends" describes in apocalyptic terms the wintry, Calvinist, capitalist - Lowell has Weber's belief in the connection of capitalism and Calvinism—dead end of God's covenant with man, a frozen Boston where even the cold-blooded serpents "whistle at the cold." (The poems often use cold as a plain and physically correct symbol for what is constricted or static.) There "the scythers, Time and Death, /Helmeted locusts, move upon the trees of breath,' of the spirit of man ; a bridge curves over Charles River like an ironic parody of the rainbow's covenant ; both "the wild ingrafted olive and its root /Are withered" (these are Paul's terms for the Judaism of the Old Law and the Gentile Christianity grafted upon it) ; "every dove (the Holy Ghost, the bringer of the olive leaf on the Ark) is sold" for commercia-

lized, legalized sacrifice. The whole system seems an abstract rationalized "graph of Revelations," of the last accusation and judgment brought against man now that "the Chapel's sharp-shinned eagle shifts its hold on serpent-Time, the rainbow's epitaph." This last line means what the last line in "The Quaker Graveyard"—"The Lord survives the rainbow of His will"—means ; both are inexpressibly menacing, since they show the covenant as something that binds only us, as something abrogated merely by the passage of time, as a closed system opening not into liberation but into infinite and overwhelming possibility : they have something of the terror, but none of the pity, of Blake's "Time is the mercy of Eternity".

Then the worshipper, like a victim, climbs to the altar of the terrible I AM, to breathe there the rarefied and intolerable ether of his union with the divinity of the Apocalypse ; he despairs even of the wings that beat against his cheek : "What can the dove of Jesus give /You now but wisdom, exile ?" When the poem has reached this point of the most extreme closure, when the infinite grace that atones and liberates is seen as no more than the bitter and useless wisdom of the exile, it opens with a rush of expectant joy into : "Stand and live, "The dove has brought an olive branch to eat". The dove of Jesus brings to the worshipper the olive branch that shows him that flood has receded, opening the whole earth for him ; it is the olive branch of peace and reconciliation, the oilve branch that he is "to eat" as a symbol of the eaten flesh of Christ, an atonement, identification, and liberation. Both the old covenant and the new still hold, nothing has changed : here as they were and will be are life and salvation.

17

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age ; that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever.

The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my red blood ; that dries the mouthing streams
Turns mine to wax.
And I am dumbe to mouth unto my veins
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks
The hand that whirls the water in the pool
Stirs the quick and that ropes the blowing wind
Hauls my shroud sail.
And I am dumb to tell the hanging man
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime.
The lips of time leech to the fountain head ;
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood
Shall calm her sores.
And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.
And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb
How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm.

(*The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flowers* : Dylan Thomas)

Critical Appreciation

Thomas's "force" is a generalized *elan vital*, the natural vitality that both creates and destroys us. Human change is but a small part of the great cycle of natural change and is effected by the same simple cause. The opening lines of each stanza present four variations on this implied theme ; the two-line refrains stress the limits of human communication by detailing the senses in which even a poet is "dumb".

I. The force is an explosive. Stalks of plants are fuses through which the explosive power is driven ; flowers and foliage are products of an explosion which creates a condition of mortality. The poet is "green" (young) and, unlike non-human organisms, is aware that birth is the beginning of death. The refrain emphasizes his humanity, his ability to communicate complex meanings only to other humans. Here the explosive image is translated into human term (fever). Fever is wintry since it hastens human age and death just as the first frost hastens vogetative age and death.

II. The vitality of growing things is extended to inanimate nature, where again the same force drives and dries (the omission of a phonome is the difference between the life and death). The poet's streams are blood streams ; the pliability and stickiness of wax applies equally to the coagulation of the blood and death and to the drying-up of mud in a stream-bed. Refrain : the force is personified as a mouth (connecting with "leech" in stanza 4). "Mouth" is used in three ways here—("tell" is altered in this refrain alone in order to give scope to the plays on words) : streams "mouth" into larger streams, into the sea ; the poet "mouths (declaims) to those who can (will) hear him ; the "mouth," adapted to giving out and taking in, symbolizes the elemental force that creates and destroys.

III. The force, here as the hand of God, keeps the elements in motion : water, earth, and air, connecting with fire in stanza I. Of course it controls the poet, now a ship, consistent with the sea imagery of the stanza ; the sail, the activated past, is the libido. Refrain : the poet can communicate only with the living part of whose clay, in various excremental forms, has long since re-entered the natural cycle and helped to compose its products.

IV. The force is time itself. The mouth symbol is developed in the verb "leech". The reduction of the life-force from anthropomorphic God to a voracious blind mouth emphasizes the naturalistic attitude in the poem. Time's leeching lips are juxtaposed with love, the only emotion named in the poem. Love acts in such a way as to place it, with the life-force, at the very pulse of life ; it drips and gathers, like blood at a leech wound, subject to the involuntary pulsation of all nature. The supposedly beneficial effects of blood-letting are paralleled with the calming effect of the sexual manifestation of love. The refrain contrasts chillingly with the warmth of love and emphasizes man's small place in the well-integrated, clockwork universe.

Refrain : The facts of death support the poet's consistent view of man's place in nature. The refrain tightens the poem by drawing on the power of earlier elements (lover's tomb and hanging man, crooked worm and crooked rose, worm and

leech, sheet and shroud sail) and by reiterating the central notion that everything is subject to decay.

The poem is saved from sentimentality, a risk it runs, by its tightly consistent attitude, which unifies images drawn from widely disparate spheres. The vocabulary, as in most of Thomas's poems, is largely restricted to common Anglo-Saxon words, predominantly monosyllabic arranged in a pattern so slowly paced that the reader is forced to explore the range of meanings of these words, revitalized by their unusual contexts. The poet is not dumb to tell his readers what he is about : "from the first declension of the flesh I learnt man's tongue...To shade and knit anew the patch of words Left by the dead who...Need no word's warmth" (from "Love's First Fever") ; "I write...Not for the towering dead... ...But for the lovers......Who pay no praise or wages Nor need my craft or art". "In My Craft" : S. F. Johnson.

18

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
And all the craggy mountains yields.

There we will sit upon the rocks
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
With a thousand fragment poises,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle:

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold
With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning :
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

(Marlowe : *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*)

Critical Appreciation

Although Marlowe was a Londoner and in many ways highly sophisticated, this poem praises the joys of country life. This country life, however, is ideal rather than real ; it is a townsman's picture of life in the country. The birds, like educated Elizabethan youths, sing madrigals, which are rather beyond the limited intelligence of the average thrush or lark ; beds of roses have no thorns or earwigs ; and a shepherdess can afford coral, amber and gold, as well as having remarkably little to do. Moreover, wool is removed from lambs by the unkind and inappropriate process of pulling, instead of with shears. Thus the poem cannot be taken very seriously. It is a pastoral poem, part of a considerable pretty tradition of happy, innocent shepherds and shepherdesses in ideal landscapes. It is a piece of the literature of escape.

As befits the artificiality of the theme, the rhythm is unadventurous, the metre conventional. Though the poem is printed as quatrains, it is really a set of twelve couplets, the rhyme-scheme being aa bb cc......The metre is iambic tetrameter with very few variations ; indeed, this poem, like Marlowe's dramatic verse, is so regular and so end-stop as to be somewhat stiff and monotonous. Inversion of the first foot is to be found in line 5, inversion of the second foot in line 13 and a weak second foot in line 16 ; there is a weak third foot in lines, 7, 11 and 15 ; the weak foot in line 7 finds compensation in the rather strong line 8. Feminine rhyme is a pleasant variant in the third verse This sounds rather dull, but the conventionality of the rhythm is suited to the subject ; a translation of the poem into free verse could be nothing but ironical.

By present-day English usage the word 'yields' with a decidedly plural subject is ungrammatical, but usage was less rigid in Marlowe's day ; similarly the rhymes 'love-prove' and 'sing-morning' are not very acceptable to a modern ear, but rules of pronunciation were more flexible in Marlowe's day, and a detailed knowledge of phonetic history would be necessary to comment on these apparently imperfect rhymes. In so conventional a piece they must be intended as full rhymes.

The repetition of 'Live with me and be my love' heightens the impression of persuasion. The shepherd's wooing is sadly lacking in passion, his pleadings being all offers of material or at best aesthetic pleasures. The list of offered pleasures is, however, pictorial and attractive. It is these pictures and the associations clustering round them which give the poem its general appeal. The 'hills and valleys, dales and fields and all the craggy mountains' suggest a varied and extensive landscape ; the 'rocks' so near to the 'craggy mountains' emphasize the romantic ruggedness of the scene, and the rivers and birds add music to visual beauty. (Mountain streams do indeed make a more musical noise than valley streams, one of the few realistic touches in the poem). Then we leave the crags to lie upon beds of roses and play with flowers. The flowers are conventional – roses and myrtle, both associated with young love, and vague 'fragrant posies', but the mention of flowers is almost always a successful evocation of beauty and freshness. The 'cap of flowers' fancy is not meaningless to people who have in childhood made cowslip balls or daisy chains ; the 'pretty lambs' are a natural image of youth, innocence and simplicity. Everyone likes lambs. 'Slippers' are somehow more domestic and feminine than 'shoes', and have more associations of affection and tenderness, perhaps because most of us have experience of a kind hand bringing our slippers for us at some time. She 'belt of straw and ivy buds with coral clasps and amber studs' is, if considered closely, somewhat incongruous and in bad taste, semi-precious stones being a most unsuitable trimming for a belt of leaves and straw, though the latter are practicable materials for a shepherdess. In fact, however, by the combination Marlowe

is suggesting the fusion of two worlds ; we are to have both irresponsibility (the pastoral simplicity and childlike play of the rustic belt) and riches (coral and amber), just as we are to have a gown of natural wool and golden buckles. This seems to me to be the emotional key of the poem ; Marlowe is implying something like : 'My dear, let us go and play at being shepherds and shepherdesses ; we need not share their hardships ; when we have made a rustic belt we can decorate it with the jewels we have brought from London'. This is a poem about the play of rich citizens who fancy some fresh air. They will, indeed, patronize the shepherds, encouraging them in their May-games, but watching, not taking part.

It is perhaps appropriate of the elegant atmosphere that the chief ornament of the poem should be alliteration, which is found in no fewer than thirteen lines out of the twenty-four. There are also a few pleasant internal echoes such as 'I' sound in the first verse, generally a soft and soothing sound, and the interweaving of I—and—sounds with pleasant onomatopoeic effect in the fourth couplet, where the sounds are appropriate to the rivers and birds.

This is not a profound or particularly sincere poem ; if it is to be taken seriously, it earns Sir Water Raleigh's dry retort beginning :

> If all the world and love were young,
> And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
> These pretty pleasures might me move
> To live with thee and be thy love.

But it must be accepted as a poem in the pastoral convention, of which it is a refined and pretty example.

The student will, I fear, notice in this little specimen of criticism a fault prevalent in all criticism, most of all in reviewing—a hint of patronage. If we are to judge something we have to make a temporary and usually quite false assumption that we stand above it. This is not very good for the human soul, though if aesthetic studies are to exist at all, we must sometimes take the risk.

(Marjorie Boulton)

5

APPLIED CRITICISM IN PROSE

SECTION I

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICAL CRITICISM IN PROSE

Alan Warner has given below the following clear-cut suggestions of practical criticism in prose :—

(*i*) **Please do not spit** : If you adopt the style of 'please do not spit' and avoid the style of expectoration is forbidden" you will go a long way towards writing clear English. You may think that this is so easy as to be not worth mentioning. It might never have occurred to you to write in the style of the first notice. But language of that kind is still common enough in official letters and documents, and its not always easy to escape from its influence without making a conscious effort. It is easy enough to write 'please do not spit', but it is only by hard and clear thinking that we can make all our statements and directions as clean and simple and pointed as this one.

(*ii*) **Cut the cackle :** There is an old English saying 'Cut the cackle, and come to the 'osses' (horses). It means, 'Cut out your silly chatter, or your introductory flourishes, and come to the point.' This is sound advice, both for the whole of what you are writing, whether essay, article, or report, and for the separate sentences that make it up. Avoid vague introductions ; come to your point ; keep your writing taut ; free of unnecessary words and circumlocutions; be as concrete and definite as you can. All this means harder and straighter thinking, and may take more time, but you will be rewarded by a firmer grip on your own thoughts and a sharper point to your pen.

(*iii*) **Call spade a spade :** To ask you to call a spade a spade is just another way of asking you to be concrete and definite. But there is one particular weakness in writing that I want to call your attention to in this section, the habit of using euphemisms instead of plain words. A euphemism is 'the substitution of a mild or vague expression for a harsh or blunt one' (Flowers). The word is derived from a Greek word meaning 'to speak favourably'. The Greek prefix 'eu' means 'well', and we find it in other English words, such as 'eulogy', which means 'praise,, 'a speaking well' of someone or something, and 'euphony', the quality having a pleasant sound. Don't confuse 'euphemism' with 'Euphuism', a word used to describe a certain style of English that had a vogue in Elizabethan England, and was started by John Lyly's *Euphues.* Euphemism and soft-pedalling not only lead to a distorted and muddy style but they serve to muffle and hide reality from us. Words are used to conceal things rather than to express them. In Ezra Pound's phrase, 'the application of word to thing becomes slushy and inexact.'

(*iv*) **Keep your ears open :** In addition to being clear and accurate, and as concrete as possible, really good clean English should have a pleasing sound. It may seem strange to suggest that the sound of written English is important, but we do in fact read with our ears as well as our eyes. You can sometimes see an unpractised reader voicing the words to himself as he reads. Most of us soon leave this stage behind but we never cease to be aware of the sound of the words we read. A cluster of clumsy 's' sounds, for example, will jar the ear, even though it is read silently:

King James's courtiers' cloaks were worn short.

This is clumsy : it offends the ear and does not flow cleanly; It is much better to turn it round and avoid 'James's courtiers' cloaks :

The courtiers of King James wore their cloaks short.

Nearly all writing has some kind of pattern that we call rhythm. In poetry this is clearly marked by rhyme, meter, alliteration and other literary devices. In the following 2 lines from Alexander Pope the pattern is very clear. He is speaking

of a timid but jealous critic, who is afraid to attack openly but slyly hints his disapproval :

Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike.

In prose the rhythmic pattern is much less marked. Rhyme and metre are not used, though alliteration frequently is, but rhythm is present to a greater or lesser degree. Alfred Doolittle, the dustman in Bernard Shaw's play, *Pygmalion*, says to Higgins : 'I'm willing to tell you, I'm wanting to tell you, I'm waiting to tell you'. Here a marked rhythmic pattern is created by the reception and alliteration, and the grouping of the statement into three equal units. The great English prose writers make effective and significant use of rhythm, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. There should be less deliberate use of rhythm for effect than with the avoidance of awkardness in sound and pattern. Such awkwardness may be caused by accidental use of literary devices, such as repetition and rhyme, or it may be due to simple clumsiness in handling words and constructing sentences, so that there is a halting, tangled movement in the writing instead of an easy, agreeable flow.

Good prose always has a harmony of its own. Its rhythm plays an important part in its meaning. If you re-read the passages from Jane Austen and Dickens you will see that each has a characteristic rhythm of its own. But this is to go beyond the limits of clean English. Only the best writers can achieve a true harmony in their style, but all of us, even in the most workaday and ordinary writing, can avoid disharmony and cacophony (an ugly displeasing sound). Keep your ears open when you are writing. Re-read what you have written aloud, if possible, and do not always be content with the first words that come into your head.

(v) **Don't Mix your Drinks :** If you wish to keep a clear head at a party and to avoid a hang-over next morning, don't mix beer with sherry, or gin with whisky. If you wish to keep a clear and clean English style, don't mix poetic devices with business jargon, or slangy colloquialisms with formal standard English. Within reasonable limits, keep to the same style.

(*vi*) **Suit the Word to the Occasion :** Although it is unwise to mix drinks or styles, this does not mean that we must always drink the same drink or write in the same style. Certain drinks are appropriate to certain occasions. Beer goes with bread and cheese for lunch ; champagne is suitable for a wedding ; rum is good drink for a bitterly cold night. In advising you to be clear and concrete in your writing, to cut the cackle and call a spade a spade. I have not yet considered the different uses to which your pen may be put. I stand by my advice in general, but in particular cases it may need modification.

(*vii*) **Hit the Nail on the Head :** Have you ever watched a clumsy man hammering a nail into a box. He hits it first to one side then to another, perhaps knocking it over completely, so that in the end he only get half of it into the wood. A skilful carpenter, on the other hand, will drive home the nail with a few firm, deft blows, hitting it each time squarely on the head. So with language ; the good craftsman will choose words that drive home his point firmly and exactly. A word that is more or less right a loose phrase, an ambiguous expression, a vague adjective, will not satisfy a writer who aims at clean English. He will try always to get the word that is completely right for his purpose. A good carpenter is not distinguished by the number of his tools, but by the craftsmanship with which he uses them. So a good writer is not measured by the extent of his vocabulary, but by his skill in finding the 'most just', the word that will hit the nail cleanly on the head.

(*viii*) **Some Pitfalls in Journalism :** The journalist earns his living by his pen. He has to write a great deal and he has to write quickly. He wants his articles and reports to be as readable and interesting as he can make them. It is an excellent thing to aim at being readable and interesting, and I wish all writers of books would keep this aim in sight, but the journalist is often tempted to be merely popular and showy. Hence the journalist's trade has fallen into disrepute. in spite of the fact that many journalists still write clean and vigorous English. The term 'journalise' is used in a deroga-

tory sense to suggest a bad style. Webster's Dictionary describes it as : "English of a style featured by use of colloquialisms, superficiality of thought or reasoning, clever or sensational presentation of material, and evidences of haste in composition, considered characteristic of newspaper-writing." But it should not be thought that journalism always leads to bad writing or that all journalists are guilty of slang, sensationalism, and vulgarity. On the contrary, some of the best English today is written by journalists. Many newspaper reports and articles contain clean and vigorous English, and the more serious English dailies would not admit writing of that sort.

(*ix*) **Too Little or too Much :** Between understatement and overstatement there are innumerable variations. It is not wrong to be extravagant with words ; you need not make a model of English caution ; but you must be guided by your feelings and intelligence, your sense of the fitness of your words to their purpose.

(*x*) **Place yourself in the background :** Write in a way that draws the reader's attention to the sense and substance of the writing, rather than to the mood and temper of the author. If the writing is solid and good, the mood and temper of the writer will become revealed finally, and not at the expense of the work. Therefore, the first piece of advice is this : to achieve style, being by affecting none—that is, place yourself in the background. A careful and honest writer does not need to worry about style. As he becomes proficient in the use of the language, his style will emerge, because he himself will emerge, and when this happens he will find it increasingly easy to break through the barriers that separate him from other minds, other hearts—which is, of course, the purpose of writing, as well as its principal reward. Fortunately, the act of composition, or creation, disciplines the mind ; writing is one way to go about thinking and the practice and habit of writing not only drain the mind but supply it, too.

(*xi*) **Write in a way that comes Naturally :** Write in a way that comes easily and naturally to you, using words and phrases that come readily to hand. But do not assume

that because you have acted naturally your product is without flaw. The use of language begins with imitation. The infant imitates the sounds made by its parents; the child imitates first spoken language, then the stuff of books. The imitative life continues long after the writer is on his own in the language, for it is almost impossible to avoid imitating what one admires. Never imitate consciously, but do not worry about being an imitator; take pains instead to admire what is good. Then when you write in a way that comes naturally, you will echo the halloos that bear repeating.

SECTION 2

STYLE AND MAN'S PERSONALITY

The style is a way of writing, a number of expressing ones thoughts and feelings in words. Suppose that a certain John Smith has just died. His own writing, a few days later to one of his friends, might say

(*i*) My beloved parent has joined the heavenly choir

Or

(*ii*) My dear father has passed away

Or

(*iii*) My father has died

Or

(*iv*) My old man has kicked the bucket.

Each of these statements communicates the same fact : that John Smith has died. But the words which express the fact are different in each case. The matter is the same, but the manner has changed. In other words, each sentence is written in a different style. The style of (*i*) is pompous and sententious : it clearly tries to raise the matter to a high-falutin', would-be-literary, dignity (*ii*) is simpler, but still emotional, perphaps a little sentimental. It avoids the word 'died' and substitutes a softer, gentler, less unpleasant expression (a euphemism). (*iii*) is a plain, brief statement in which the writer's feelings are not directly indicated. (*iv*) employs a slangy, colloquial style ; 'old man' for 'father' and 'kicked the bucket' for 'died'. We might say that his style suggests a lack of respect for his father. This simple example will serve to show how important style is. Although the fact is the same in each case, the total effect on the reader of what is

written, the full meaning of the sentence, different. The way in which something is said inevitably affects what is said.

Some simple people think that style, or what they might call 'good style', or 'literary style', is something that can be added to plain thoughts or a plain statement of facts, as icing can be put on to a cake. A student once said to me, 'I have written my report, but I have brought it to you to put some style into it. I could not put 'style' into it. It was already written in a certain style, though it may not have been a very good style. I could have rewritten it in a different style. Then it would have been my arrangement of facts, my choice of words, my style. In trying to state his facts, shaping his ideas in words, every writer is expressing himself in a certain style, though it may not have any very marked features. In the words of Cardinal Newman : 'Matter and expression are parts of one ; style is a thinking out into language'.

The more recent writers, Brooks and Warren, is an excellent book, *Fundamentals of Good Writing*, have compared style to the grain in wood.'The style of a work is not a sort of veneer glued over the outside. On the contrary, it is like the pattern of the grain in a piece of wood. It is a pattern that goes all the way through ; a manifestion of the growth and development of the structure of the tree itself'. As a man thinks and feels, so will he write. If his thoughts are muddled, his style will be muddled. If his thoughts are clear and sharp, his writing will be clear and sharp. 'A man's style', wrote Emerson, 'is his mind's voice'. And he added : 'Wooden minds, wooden voices'.

Since style is something ingrained in writing and not stuck on top like a veneer, it follows that a man's way of writing will be an expression of his personality and his way of looking at life. This explains the famous and much-quoted definition of style given by Buffoon, a French writer and naturalist of the eighteenth century. He wrote : 'Le style, c'est Phomme meme'. (Style, it is the man himself). Once you have become familiar with their personalities, it is not difficult to recognize styles of many famous English writers. Let us take a few examples.

(*i*) **Jane Austen's style :** Jane Austen saw life in a clear, daylight. She was not without deep human sympathies, but she had a quick eye for vanity, selfishness and vulgarity, and she perceived the frequent incongruities between the way people talked and the realities of a situation. Her style is quiet and level. She never exaggerates, she never, as it were, raises her voice to shout or scream. She is neither pompous, nor sentimental, nor flippant, cut always gravely polite, and her writing contains a delicate but sharp-edged irony. Below is a characteristic passage from the novel *Emma*. The village of Highbury is in an excited buzzy of gossip because the clergyman, Mr. Elton, has just become engaged to a certain Miss Hawkins :

> Human nature is so well disposed towards those who are in interesting situations, that a young person who either marries or dies is sure of being kindly spoken of.
>
> A week had not passed since Miss Hawkins's name was first mentioned in Highbury before she was, by some means or other, discovered to have every recommendation of person and mind,—to be handsome, elegant highly accomplished, and prefectly amiable ; and when Mr. Elton himself arrived to triumph in his happy prospects, and circulate the fame of her merits, there was very little more for him to do than to tell her Christian name and say whose music she principally played.

The tone is so quiet that we get almost a shock at the sly placing together of 'marries or dies' in the first sentence. This seems very incongruous. Surely to marry and to die are very different things. But in this village, where marriage and deaths are infrequent and important events, both of them equally excite kindly gossip. The observation reveals a shrewd, detached mind.

(*ii*) **Charles Dickens's Style :** Here is a very different way of writing. Charles Dickens is describing Stone Lodge, the home of Mr. Gradgrind, in *Hard Times* :

> To his matter-of-fact home, which was called Stone Lodge, Mr. Gradgrind directed has steps......

> A very regular feature on the face of the country, Stone Lodge was. Now the least disguise toned down or shaded off that uncompromsing fact in the landscape. A great square house, with a heavy portico darkening the principal windows, as its master's heavy brows overshadowed his eyes. A calculated. cast-up, balanced, and proved house. Six windows on this of the door, six on that :, total of twelve in the other wing ; four-and-twenty carried over to the back wings. A lawn and garden and an infant avenue, all ruled straight like a botanical account-book. Gas and ventilation, drainage and water-service, all of the primest quality. Iron clamps and girders, fireproof from top to bottom ; mechanical lifts for the house maids, with all their brushes and brooms ; everything that he could desire.

Dickens has more than one style. He does not always write like this ; but this passage illustrates one of his most characteristic styles. He works by a strong emphasis on his main points, by exaggeration of the thing he wants to call attention to. This is indicated by his names : *Mr. Gradgrind* and *Stone Lodge* suggest hardness, cold fact, the absence of tenderness and grace. The description of the house reinforces this point. Notice that the regularity and strict arithmetical proportions of the house are not just mentioned once but repeated again and again. 'A calculated, cast up, balanced and proved house. Six windows on this side, six on that side ; a total of twelve in this wing, a total of twelve in the other wing ; four-and-twenty carried over to the back wings'. Even the lawn and garden and avenue are made to conform. Dicken's criticism of the 'the Gradgrind philosophy', of the utilitarian attitude to life that took account only of facts and statistics and disregarded human feelings, is direct and forceful. Detail is heaped upon detail to create a suitable house for Mr. Gradgrind, a house that hardly resembles an actual house. The same element of exaggeration is to be found in many of Dickens's characters. That was the way his imagination worked and his style reveals his way of looking at things and people. We can at once recognize the same mind and

pen at work in the following description of Miss Murdstone in *David Copperfield* :

> It was Miss Murdstone who has arrived, and a gloomy-looking lady she was ; dark, like her brother whom she greatly resembled in face and voice ; and with very heavy eyebrows, nearly meeting all over her large nose, as if, being disabled by the wrongs of her sex from wearing whiskers, she had carried them to that account. She brought with her two uncompromising hard black boxes, with her initials on the lids in hard brass nails. When she paid the coachman she took her money out of a hard steel purse, and she kept the purse in a very jail of a bag which hung upon her arm by a heavy chain, and shut up like a bite. I had never, at that time, seen such a metallic lady altogether as Miss Murdstone was.

It will be clear enough by now that the style of Dickens is very different from the style of Jane Austen. Any reader who has even a little familiarity with the novels of these two writers should have no difficulty at all in distinguishing at once between a passage from Dickens and a passage from Jane Austen. Their very different personalities are revealed. It is plain, blunt, and vigorous. The egotism of his references to himself and his achievements is so frank and open that it is offensive. You may disagree with what Cobbett says, but there is no mistaking his meaning. He calls a spade a spade, and a drunkard a beast. These two examples will serve to show how closely a writer's style is related to his personality and his way of looking at life. In each case it is almost impossible to separate what is said from the way it is said. In discussing the style, I have inevitably been discussing the point of view and personality of the author.

SECTION 3

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN POETRY AND PROSE

Difficulties of distinguishing between Poetry and Prose : It is difficult to put into exact words the difference between poetry and prose. The dividing line is often shadowy because much so-called prose has poetic qualities and much so-called poetry, prosaic qualities. A good deal of what we commonly regard as prose is, in essence, poetry, and and a good deal more of what we commonly regard as poetry is, in essence, prose.

We are likely to classify and writing that has rhyme and rhythm as poetry, and any other writing as prose. The two examples given below seem to refute this theory. The one in rhyme and meter has not a spark of poetic fire ; in the one without rhyme and metre the poetic fire is unquestionable. A recent critic has pointed out that David's lament over Jonathan :

> The love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women,

is instinct with the breath of poetry, whereas Pope's material paraphrase of it,

> The love was wondrous, soothing all my care,
> Passing the fond affection of the fair,

is not much more than artificial affectation. The same critic suggests that the hopeless pathos of Isaiah's.

> The sun shall be no more thy light by day ; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto these

is shattered for ever in Pope's rhymed version.

> No more the rising Sun shall gild the morn,
> Nor ev'ning Cynthia fill her silver born,

The same observation must strike you at once when you compare Addison's hymn,

> The specious firmament on high,
> With all the blue ethereal sky,
> And spangled heavens, a shining trame,
> Their great Original proclaim

with its Biblical epuivalent,

> The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament sheweth His handy work.

It is clearly evident that many of the beautiful passages in the King James version of the Bible, though they are not in metrical form, are more eloquently poetical than all the rhymed couplets in existence. Tnese verses from the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes you have only to read aloud to feel the power of their rhythm :

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy 'Youth' while the evil days come not, nor the years draw night, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them ;

While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain :

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves. . . . . .and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

And the doors shall be shut in the strees......and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low ;

And when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail : because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets :

On ever the silver corde be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken. . . . .or the wheel broken at the cistern

Then shall be dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return up to God who gave it.

There is hardly an element of all that we usually regard as poetry which is not found in this passage. Here are pictures, symbols, images, phrases haunted with the accumulated connotations of man's centuries of experience with life and death. Nor is the Bible alone in possessing this poetic quality. It is found in a good deal of the best English prose, from the glowing pulsations of the finest paragraphs of Ruskin and Carlyle to the elusive lilt in the dialogue of the Irish plays of Yeats and Synge. Such passages illustrate the difficulty of distinguishing between poetry and prose. There are, however, three general characteristics of poetry, one specific, the others necessarily vague.

Regularity of metrical pattern : The most tangible characteristics of poetry is rhythm secured by regularity of metrical pattern. Much prose has every element of poetry except this of metrical pattern. But all poetry, even free verse, has some pattern of recurrent rhythm or rhyme, or both.

The Poet's use of words : The second characteristics of poetry is that the poet uses words with imaginative insight to suggest more than they may be defined to mean. In general the main function of words in prose is to make statements, to convey ideas and facts clearly; in poetry the main function of, words is to arouse moving suggestions. This use of suggestive words stirs our feelings and imaginations. We have all experienced tne baffled sensation of lacking appropriate words with which to express our feelings or thoughts ; and most of us have found these feelings and thoughts expressed definitively in a passage from one of the great poets. The essence of a thousand love stories, for instance, is suggested—not stated—in a single stanza by Robert Burns :

> Had we never loved sae kindly,
> Had we never loved sae blindly,
> Never met—or never parted,
> We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

The staggering conception of eternal damnation has been summed up in a few words in Dante's *Inferno*. Over the gates of Hell, Dante says, are these words :

> All hope abandon, ye who enter here.

The thundering significance of these few words has caught and held the imagination of generations. Such passages as these are remarkable for what they suggest rather than for what they directly state.

Poetic Language in Prose: Many prose writers also use words which arouse our feelings and our imagination by the power of suggestion. For instance, Hawthorne's choice of figurative language to suggest his meaning is often instinctively poetic. When he says that Phoebe was as 'pleasant about the house as a gleam of sunshine falling on the floor through a shadow of twinkling leaves'; when he describes the garden as a 'green-play-place of flickering light and shade" and the humming bird as 'a thumb's bigness of burnished plumage', he is using words much as a poet does, to suggest moods and pictures. But as his words have no metrical pattern, they are not poetry. Moreover, poetical prose, however beautiful, does not usually linger in the memory as does poetry. It is the poet rather than the prose writer who uses words primarily for purposes of suggestion instead of primarily for purposes of direct statement. To the poet, words in themselves are beautiful.

SECTION 4

TYPES OF PROSE

(*i*) **Straightforward or utilitarian writing :** The success with which a writer compose everyday prose depends on the skill, patience and experience with which he handles the language. This sort of prose has been called straightforward and everyday. It is utilitarian prose. We do not look to it for style and personality. Its style, if it has style, consists in the absence of literary devices ; the personality of the writer is best expressed when it does not obtrude itself.

(*ii*) **Rhetorical Prose :** In its most general meaning, the principles governing the use of language for effective speaking and writing. To the Classical theoreticians, the study of rhetoric was essential for effective oratory. To this end, such writers as Aristotle, Quintilian, and Longinus codified the theories of rhetoric, which, along with logic and grammar, became during the Middle Ages, one of the basic studies of the trivium. The following passage illustrates the rhetorical style. The author gives hard-hitting argument, intended not so much to persuade by sweet reasonableness as to hammer home a point. It is rhetorical tub-thumbing : its keynote is a manly scorn. The language is strong and vigorous ; there are very few adjectives—only one or two are used descriptively (e.g. '*a base* disposition'), the others for the most part being used predicatively (*e.g.* 'the man that is *poor* and *contented* ').

> I lay it down as a maxim, that for a family to be happy, they must be well supplied with food and raiment. It is a sorry effort that people make to persuade others or to persuade themselves, that they can be happy in a state of want of the necessaries of life. The doctrines which fanaticism preaches, and which teach men to be content with poverty, have a very pernicious tendency, and are calculated to favour tyrants by giving them passive slaves. To live well

> to enjoy all things that make life pleasant, is the right of every man who constantly uses his strength judiciously and lawfully. It is to blaspheme God to suppose that he created men to be miserable, to hunger, thirst, and perish with cold, in the midst of that abundance which is the fruit of their own labour. Instead, therefore, of applauding 'happy poverty', which applause is so much the fashion of the present day, I despise the man that is poor and contented ; for such is a certain proof of a base disposition, a disposition which is the enemy of all industry, all exertion, all love of independence. (Wiliam Cobbett).

(*iii*) **Plain narrative :** Here we have given the example of style of Mungo Park which is the standard prose of the late eighteenth century. This style is free from literary pretentions. Clarity and exactness were its aim, to be achieved while observing literary propriety : this meant using the language and sentence-constructions which Dr. Johnson would have used. To us the sentences seem long and complex, the language in places stilled and latinized. In spite of all this, however, Park's style was direct, and what is sometimes called 'masculine' free from affectation and obscurity. His story proceeds naturally and easily, without digressions and without excessive barrenness. He is never pompous and never dull. He never betrays, an attitude of superiority of condescension towards the natives. If he is sometimes pious, his piety is sincere. He writes frankly, but without exageration. He is modest but without false modesty. He frequently refers to his own feelings. "To my great mortification", "I was weary and dejected", "the circumstance was affecting in the highest degree", "oppressed by such unexpected kindness"—in such expressions he refers to his feelings leaving the reader to imagine the details.

(*iv*) **Prose Saturated with Realism :** Stephen Crane's realistic prose is quoted below :—

> The youth stared at the land in front of him. Its foliage now seemed to veil powers and horrors. He was unaware of the machinery of orders that started

the charge, although from the corners of his eyes he saw in officer, who looked like a boy a-horseback, come galloping, waving his hat. Suddenly he felt a straining and leaving among the men. The line fell slowly forward like a toppling wall, and, with a convulsive gasp that was intended for a cheer, the regiment began its journey.

The youth was pushed and jostled for a moment before he understood movement at all, but directly he lunged ahead and began to run.

He fixed his eye upon a distant prominent clump of trees where he had concluded the enemy were to be met, and he ran toward it as toward a goal. He had believed throughout that it was a mere question of getting over an unpleasant matter as quickly as possible, and he ran desperately, as if pursued for a murder. His face was drawn hard and tight with the stress of his endeavour. His eyes were fixed in a lurid glare. And with his soiled and disordered dress, his red and inflamed features surmounted by the dingy rag with its spot of blood, his wildly-swinging rifle and banging accountrements, he looked to be an insane soldier.

As the regiment swing from its position out into a cleared space, the woods and thickets before it awakened. Yellow flames leaped toward it from many directions. The forest made a tremendous objection.

The line lurched straight for a moment. Then the right wing swung forward : it in turn was surpassed by the left. Afterward the centre careered to the front until the regiment was a wedge-shaped mass, but an instant later the opposition of the bushes, trees and uneven places on the ground split the command and scattered it into detched clusters.

The youth, light-footed, was unconsciously in advance. His eyes still kept note of the clump of trees. From all places near it the clannish yell of the enemy could be heard. The little flames of rifles leaped from it. The song of the bullets was in the air, and shells snarled among the treetops. One

> tumbled directly into the middle of a hurrying group and exploded in crimson fury. There was an instant's spectacle of a man, almost over it, throwing up his hands to shield his eyes.

Crane's style is calm and objective. Yet the horror and destruction of war are all the more clearly expressed because of this dispassionate style of writing' The writer is not himself cold or detached ; he writes rather as if he were holding back his feelings and letting events make their own impression. Crane achieves his purpose by a skiful mixture of the concrete and the abstract. Consider on the one hand the vivid snapshots contained in the references to the officer waving his hat, the distant clump of trees, the eyes of the youth 'fixed in a lurid glare', his dingy bandage with its spote of blood, the yellow flames, the man shielding his eyes from the exploding shell ; and on the other hand, consider the more abstract suggestion in 'Its foliages now seemed to veil powers and horrors' and 'He had believed throughout that it was a mere question of getting over an unpleasant matter as quickly as possible'. Consider also in its context the statement 'The forest made a tremendous objection'. In terms of physical fact this means that the advancing men met with heavy gunfire from enemy positions in the forest. Expressed in the more abstract way, however, it implies that the forest itself resisted their advance in a terrifying way ; it reinforces the previous observation. 'Its foliages now seemed to veil powers and horrors'.

(James Reeves).

(*v*) **Subjective and Personal Style :** Here is the quotation from D. H. Lawrence's prose :—

> The car ploughed uphill through the long squalid straggle of Tevershall, the blackened brick dwellings, black slate roofs glistening their sharp edges, the mud black with coal-dust, the pavements wet and black. It was as if dismalness had soaked through and through everything. The utter negation of natural beauty, the utter negation of the gladness of life, the utter absence of the instinct for shapely beauty which every bird and beast has, the utter

death of the human intuitive faculty was appealing. Thh stacks of soap in the grocers shops, the rhubarb and lemons in the greengrocers ! the awful hats in the milliners ! all went by ugly, ugly, followed by the plaster and gilt horror of the cinema with its wet picture announcements' ; *A Woman's Love*, and the new big Primitive chapel, primitive enough in its stark brick and big panes of greenish and raspberry glass in the windows. The Wesleyan chapel, higher up, was of blackened brick and stood behind iron railings and blackened shrubs. The Congregational chapel, which thought itself superior, was built of rusticated sandstone and had a steeple, note a very high one Just beyond were the new school buildings, expensive pink brick, and gravelled playground inside iron railings, all very imposing, and mixing the suggestion of a chapel and prison.

This is a description of a mining village in the Midlands. of the kind which sprang up in the nineteenth century when the coalfields were being exploited without regard for design or beauty. Lawrence is here concerned to give a picture of soul-destroying squalor and ugliness. He choose a rainy-day, which adds to the effect of depression, but such days are common in of Midlands. He makes no attempt to be detached and objective, but stamps upon every sentence his own loathing and disgust. The objects in the description and the words used to project them on to the reader's eyes are deliberately selected to heighten this impression. There is nothing for which he can find a good word. Not only does he describe the physical horror of Tevershall, he comments also on the social snobbery which exists between rival chapel congregations and the cultural philistinism which builds a new school in the likeness of a combined chapel and prison. (James Reeves).

(*vi*) **Psychological narrative :** The passage is quoted from Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse*, The author is. concerned w'th creating the right atmosphere and laying the foundations of the characters. In this kind of writing, psychological speculations and the minute analysis of the characters' states of mind are more important than narrative. In the

second paragraph there is only one short sentence, in marked contrast to the immensely lengthy sentence which follows it. This final sentence of the second paragraph, although consisting of 105 words, contains only four clauses ; these are amplified by the inclusion of the list beginning with 'The wheelbarrow', the appositional phrase 'his secret language', descriptive phrases such as 'with his high forehead,' etc., participial expressions like 'frowning slightly', etc., and 'watching him guide his scissors', etc., and the alternative 'or directing a stern and momentous enterprise', etc. The style, therefore, tends to be a rambling series of phrases and expressions loosely strung together, with a minimum of finite verbs. It is especially adapted for rendering the loosely connected, unhurrying impressions and sensations which flow through the mind. The passage discussed here is quoted below :—

> 'Yes, of course, if its fine to-morrow', said Mrs. Ramsay. 'But you'll have to be up with the lark,' she added.
>
> To her son these words conveyed and extraordinary joy, as if it were settled the expedition were bound to take place, and the wonder to which he had looked forward, for years and years it seemed, was, after a night's darkness and a day's sail, within touch. Since he belonged even at the age of six, to that great clan which cannot keep this feeling separate from that, but must let feature prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is actually at hand, since to such people even in earliest childhood any turn in the wheel of sensation has the power to crystallise and trans fix the moment upon which its gloom or radiance rests, James Ramsay, sitting on the floor cutting out pictures from the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores, endowed the picture of a refrigerator as his mother spoke with heavenly bliss. It was fringed with joy. The wheelbarrow, the lawnmower, the sound of poplar trees, leaves whitening before rain, rooks cawing, brooms knockin, dresses rustling—all these were so coloured and distinguished

in his mind that he had already his private code, his secret language, though he appeared the image of stark and uncompromising severity, with his high forehead and his fierce blue eyes, impeccably candid and pure, frowning slightly at the sight of human frailty, so that his mother, watching him guide his scissors neatly round the refrigerator, imagined him all red and ermine on the Bench or directing a stern and momentous enterprise in some crisis of public affairs.

'But', said father, stopping in front of the drawing-room window, 'it won't be fine'.

Had there been an axe handy, a poker, or any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then. James would have seized it. Such were the extremes of emotion that Mr. Ramsay excited in the children's breaste by his mere presence ; standing, as now, lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one, grinning sarcastically, not only with the pleasure of disillusioning his son and casting ridicule upon his wife, who was ten thousand times better in every way than he was (James thought), but also with some secret conceit at his own accuracy of judgment. What he said was true. It was always true. He was incapable of untruth ; never tempered with a fact ; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all of his own children, who, sprung from his loins, should be aware from childhood that life is difficult ; facts uncompromising ; and the passage to that fabled land where our brightest hopes are extinguished, our frail barks founder in darkness (here Mr. Ramsay would straighten his back and narrow his little blue eye upon the horizon), one that needs, above all, courage, truth, and the power to endure.

6

APPLIED CRITICISM OF PROSE

SOLVED EXAMPLES

(1)

The rest of the small congregation was of no particular note. As I have said before, it had greatly fallen away, and all who remained clung to the chapel rather by force of habit than from any other reason. The only exception was an old maiden lady and her sister, who lived in a little cottage about a mile out of the town. They were pious in the purest sense of the word, suffering much from ill-health, but perfectly resigned, and with a kind of tempered cheerfulness always apparent on their faces, like the cheerfulness of a white sky with a sun veiled by light and loftly clouds. They were the daughters of a gentleman farmer, who had left them a small annuity. Their house was one of the sweetest which I ever entered. The moment I found myself inside it, I became conscious of perfect repose. Everything was at rest ; books, pictures, furniture, all breathed the same peace. Nothing in the house was new, but everything had been preserved with such care that nothing looked old. Yet the owners were not what is called old maidish ; that is to say, they were not superstitious worshippers of order and neatness. I remember Mrs. Snale's children coming in one afternoon when I was there. They were rough and ill-mannered, and left traces of dirty footmarks all over the carpet, which the two ladies noticed at once. But it made no difference to the treatment of the children, who had some cake and currant wine given to them, and were sent away rejoicing. Directly they were gone, the eldest of my friends asked me if I would excuse her ; she would gather up the dirt before it was trodden about. So she brought a dust-pan and

brush (the little servant was out) and patiently swept the floor. That was the way with them. Did any mischief befall them or those whom they knew; without blaming anybody, they immediately and noiselessly set about repairing it with the silent promptitude of nature which rebels not against a wound, but the very next instant begins her work of protection and recovery. W. Hale White : *Two Maiden Ladies* (*The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford, 1881*)

Comments : William Hale White was a Victorian writer, but he is singularly free from the ponderousness that we find in many Victorians. The writing in this passage is simple, easy, and natural. It conveys exactly the impression of the two ladies that he wishes to convey. There is no trace of affectation or mannerism ; the writing nowhere calls attention to itself. The single image of 'a white sky veiled by light and lofty clouds' is all the more effective because it is not surrounded by other images. This is a sober and quiet prose, but it has the beauty of clear light and air. There are many short sentences but they are not overdone. There is nothing abrupt and jerky about the style. It flows easily and quietly, like the lives of the two ladies it describes.

(2)

In all these ways the parish, if not a true village, seemed quite a country-place twenty years ago, and its people were country people. Yet there was another side to the picture. The charm of it was a generalized one—I think an impersonal one ; for with the thought of individual persons who might illustrate it there comes too often into my memory a touch of sordidness, if not in one connection then in another ; so that I suspect myself, not for the first time, of sentimentality. Was the social atmosphere after all anything but a creation of my own dreams ? Was the village life really idyllic ?

Not for a moment can I pretend that it was. Patience and industry dignified it ; a certain rough jollity, a large amount of good temper and natural kindness, kept it from being

foul; but of the namby-pamby or soft-headed sentiment which many writers have pursuaded us to attribute to old English cottage life. I think I have not in twenty years met with a single trace. In fact, there are no people so likely to make ridicule of that sort of thing as my labouring-class neighbours have always been. They do not, like the middle classes, enjoy it. It is a commodity for which they have no use, as may appear in the following pages.

To say this, however, is to say too little. I do not mean that the prevailing temper in the village was sordid, bitter, cruel, like that, say, of the Norman peasantry in de Maupassant's short stories. In by far the greater majority the people have usually seemed to me at the worst a little suspicious, a little callous, a little undemonstrative, and at the best generous and happy-go-lucky to a fault. Nevertheless, tales as repulsive as any that the French writer has told of his country-people could have been collected here by anyone with a taste for that sort of thing. Circumstantial narratives have reached me of savage, or, say, brutish, doings: of sons ill-treating their mothers, and husbands their wives; of fights and cruelties, and sometimes—not often—of infamous vice. The likelihood of these tales, which there was no reason to doubt, was strengthened by what I saw and heard for myself. Drunkenness corrupted and disgraced the village life, so that good men went wrong and their families suffered miserably. I have helped more than one drunkard home at night, and seen a wretched woman or a frightened child come to the door to recieve him. Even in the seclusion of my own garden I could not escape the evidences of mischief going on. For sounds echo up and down the valley as clearly as across the water of a lake; and sometimes a quiet evening would grow suddenly horrid with distracted noises of family quarrel in some distant cottage, when women shrilled and clamoured and men crushed, and all the dogs in the parish fell a-barking furiously. Even in bed one could not be secure. Once or twice some wild cry in the night—a woman's scream, a man's volley of oaths—has drawn me hurrying to my window in dread that outrage was afoot; and often the sounds of obscene singing from the road where men were blundering homewards hate

from the public-houses in the town, have startled me out of my first steep. Then besides the distresses brought upon the people by their own folly, there were others thrust upon them by their economic condition. Of poverty, with its attendant sicknesses and neglects, there has never been any end to the tales, while the desolations due to accidents in the day's work, on the railway, or with horse or upon scaffoldings of building, or in collapsing gravel-quarries, have become almost a commonplace. In short, there is no room for sentimentality about the village life. Could its annals be written they would make no idyll; there would be too much stained by tragedy and vice and misery.

George Bourne : *The Dark Side of Village Life* (*Change in the Village 1912*).

Comments: The writer is endeavouring to give a true piture of what village life was like in the parish he knew about twenty years ago. He is anxious not to be sentimental nor to exaggerate the violence and cruelty of the villagers. He chooses his words carefully to give us exactly the right impression. The villagers are not 'sordid, better, cruel' but' a little suspicious, a little callous, a little undemonstrative'. He avoids 'writing up' or dramatizing village life. He is nowhere concerned with creating an effect by his language, but only with giving as accurate and honest a picture as he can. Although at this point in the book he is generalizing and giving an overall impression of village life, yet there is plenty of concrete detail in this passage. The refrences to 'a woman's scream', 'a man's volley of oaths', and the 'wretched woman' or 'frightened child' coming to the door to admit the drunkard he has helped home, give us vivid glimpses of reality. We feel the writer is not simply offering us vague generalizations but writing of what he knows intimately.

(3)

A great deal of the world's work is neither producing material things nor altering the things that Nature produces, but doing services of one sort or another.

......Thoughtless people are apt to think a brickmaker more of a producer than a clergyman. When a village carpenter makes a gate to keep cattle out of a field of wheat, he has something solid in his hand which he can calim for his own until the former pays him for it. But when a village boy makes a noise to keep the birds off, he has nothing to shew, thought the noise is just as necessary as the gate. The postman does not make anything ; he only delivers letters and parcels. The policeman does not make anything ; and the soldier not only does not make things ; he distroys them. The doctor makes pills sometimes ; but that is not his real business, which is to tell you when you ought to take pills, and what pills to take, unless indeed he has the good sense to tell you not to take them at all, and you have the good senese to believe him when he is giving you good advice instead of bad. The lawyer does not make anything substantial, nor the clergyman nor the member of Parliament, nor the domestic servant (though she sometimes breaks things), nor the Queen or King, nor an actor. When their work is done they have nothing in hand that can be weighed or measured ; nothing that the maker can keep from others until she is paid for it. They are all in service : in domestic service like the housemaid, or in commercial service, like the shop assistant, or in Government service like the postman, or in State service like the King ; and all of us who have fullsize conscience consider ourselves in what some of us call the service of God.

And then, besides the persons who make the substantial things there must be persons to find our how they should be made. Beside the persons who do things there must be persons who know how they should be done, and decide when they should be done, and how much they should be done. In simple village life both the making or the doing and the thinking may be done by the same person when he is a black-smith carpenter or builder; but in big cities and highly civilized countries this is impossible : one set of people has to make and do whilst another set of people thinks and decides what, when, how much, and by whom. Shaw : *Goods and services* (*The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, 1928*.)

Comments : Bernard Shaw is here making a general point in economic theory. He does it without using jargon of the specialist. His language is clear, simple and concrete. He illustrates his point by referring to actual things and people, such as the village carpenter with his gate. A modern economist might say that this picture of the world's work is over-simplified, but this is perhaps justified at this point in his general argument. The writing has Shaw's characteristic : vigour and emphasis. We see this in the repeated pattern : 'The postman does not make...... The policeman does not make......The lawyer does not make......' We also see Shaw's prejudice against doctors appearing in his remarks about pills.

(4)

There was a peasant near Jerusalem who acquired a yung game-cock which looked a shabby little thing, but which put on brave feathers as spring advanced, and wns replendent with arched and orange neck by the time the fig trees were letting out leaves from their end-tips.

This peasant was poor, he lived in a cottage of mud-bricks, and had only a dirty little innter courtyard wih a tough fig tree for all his territory. He worked hard among the vines and olives and wheat of his master, then came home to sleep in the mud-brick cottage by the path. But he was proud of his young rooster. In the shut-in-yard were three shabby hens which laid small eggs, shed the few feather they had, and made a disproportionate amount of dirt. There was also in a corner under a straw roof, a dull donkey that often went out with the peasans, a wife, a black-browed youngish woman who did not work too hard. She threw a little grain, or the remains of the porridge mess, to the fowls, and she cut green foder with a sickle for the ass.

. The young cock grew to a certain splendour. By some freak of distiny, he was a dandy rooster, in that dirty little yard with three patchy hens. He learned to crane his neck and give shrill answers to the crowing of other cocks, beyond and walls, in a world he knew nothing of. But there was a special

fiery colour to his crow, and the distant calling of the other cocks roused him to unexpected outbursts.

'How he sings', said the peasant, as he got up and pulled his day-shirt over his head.

'He is good for twenty hens,' said the wife.

The peasant went out and looked with pride at his young rooster. A saucy, flamboyant bird, that had already made the final acquaintance of three tattered hens. But the cockerel was tipping his head, listening to the challenge of far-off unseen cocks, in the unknown world. Ghost voices, crowing at him mysteriously out of limbo. He answered with a ringing defiance, never to be daunted.

'He will surely fly away one of these days', said the peasant's wife.

So they lured him with grain, caught him, though he fought with all his wings and feet, and they tired, a cord round his shank, fastening it against the spur ; and they tied the other end of the cord to the post that held up the donkey's straw pent-roof.

The young cock, freed, marched with a pranching stride of indignation away from the humans, came to the end of his string ; gave a tug and a hitch of his tied leg, fell over for a moment, scuffled frantically on the unclean earthen floor, to the horror of the shabby hens, then with a sickening lurch, regained his feet and stood to think. The peasant and the peasant's wife laughed heartily, and the young cock heard them. And he knew, with a gloomy foreboding kind of knowledge, that he was tied by the leg.

D. H. Lawrence : *A Peasant and his Cock* (The Man Who Died, 1931).

Comments : The language of this passage is easy, natural, almost colloquial. But it presents vividly the 'dirty little yard' and the young cock in it. The adjectives are exactly right : 'dandy rooster', 'saucy, flamboyant bird', 'there was a special fiery colour in his crow'. The writer enters imaginatively into the feelings of the humiliated cock. The sentences are mostly simple and cumulative in structure, but they are not monotonous and they flow easily, the writing

in no way calls attention to itself, but it focusses our imagination on the scene described.

(5)

There is a gnat, called *anopheles*, from the Creek word for 'hurtful'. Many gnats have the mouth armed with stabbing and sucking styles. So this one. It stabs the skin and draws blood. There is an 'anopheles' with dappled wings. It bites men. Only the female bites. She has effs to nourish. She takes human blood once a day. She then flies to a shaded corner. For instance, having bitten some inmate of a dwelling, shaded for coolness in the tropics, she then settles in a dim corner of it to digest her meal.

Tae so-called 'bite' happens like this. The gnat when she alights on the skin tests the place with her labellum. Then steadying her head against the skin she stabs by styles with dagger points and saw-like edges. Swaying her head as she uses her mouth-parts she works these through the skin. They go through and among the blood-vessels, and carry with them a tiny tube like a hollow needle, close behind the stabbing style. It leads from a poison-gland. It injects a droplet of juice into the stabbed wound. This makes the blood-vessels flush ; they bring more blood in the stabbed spot. Also the juice delays the clotting short the yield of blood from the tine wound. Nature has provided her with special tools and a special zest for thoroughness. She sucks the blood by a tube which leads straight to her stomach. Tich food it is, human blood......

Our dapple-wing gnat when she "bites' her human quarry, and injects as always her droplet of juice to make the blood flow better' may be healthy, or she may not. She may be infected with the parasite of malaria. In herself it seems to do little or no harm. She is what is called a 'Carrier'. The parasite swarms especially in her poison-gland near the gnat's head. The doblet of juice which the infected gnat injects swarms with little spindle-shaped wriggling creatures, the sporozoties of *plasmodium*, the microscopic parasite of malaria. These enter the circulation of the 'bitten' person where the tine blood-vessels have been laid open by the bite. Thus they are let loose within the circulating human blood.

Then tragedy ensues. They lose no time. They attack and enter the red cells. Inside the red cell the parasite which has entered it sits quiet at first, a very minute amoeba-like thing. Later it crawls about in the red cell, the living house it has seizd and is to ruin. It gradually eats out the inside of the cell, and it grows. When it has eaten out the whole of the human red cell it splits up into a family of young. The killed and distended red cell bursts and lets them loose. Released into the blood each of these young one in its turn attacks a red cell as its parent did ; it enters, grows and eats the red cell's heart out, repeating the old cycle.

Sir Charles Sherrington ; *The Malaria Mosquito* (Man on his Nature).

Comments : This passage shows that scientists, too, can write clean English. Although there are one or two technical words here they are easily absorbed by the reader. The language in general is not abstract or technical. The passage as a whole gives a remarkably clear and exact exposition of how malaria is transmitted. Moreover, the facts are not merely stated ; they are vividly imagined. The writer's feelings are involved as well as his intellect. It might perhaps be objected that the sentences are too short and simple, and that the result is jerkey. 'It bites man. Only the female bites. She has eggs to nourish. She takes human blood once a day.' The writing does not flow as easily and smoothly as the first passage in this chapter, for example ; but I think this slight jerkiness is excusable in the careful step by step analysis of the facts that this writer is making. A diagram is provided in the book, but the writer's explanation is so clear that it can be followed without a diagram.

(6)

I have been told that the charge against me is based on the reports of these speeches I delivered in the Gorakhpur district early in October last. Copies of these reports, and in one case their translation into English, have been given to me. I have read these, and I cannot congratulate the persons who were responsible for the reporting. These reports, though presumably taken down in shorthand, are scrappy and incomplete, confusing, and often making little sense......

It is not my intention to give details of the many errors and mistakes in these reports. That would mean re-writing them completely. That would waste your time, sir, and mine, and would serve little purpose. I am not here to defend myself, and perhaps what I say in this statement will make your task easier. I do not yet know the exact nature of the charge against me. I gather that it relates to my refrences to war and the attempts being made to compel the people of India to take part in the war effort. If that is so, I shall gladly admit the charge. It is not necessary to go to garbled reports to find out what I or other Congressmen say in regard to India and the war. The Congress resolutions and statements, carefully and precisely worded, are there for all the world to know. By those resolutions and statements I stand, and I consider it my duty to take the message of the Congress to the people of India.

I stand before you, sir, as an individual being tried for certain offences against the State. You are a symbol of that State. But I am something more than an individual also. I, too, am a symbol at the present moment, a symbol of Indian nationalism, resolved to break away from the British Empire and achieve the independence of India. It is not me that you are seeking to judge and condemn, but rather the hundreds of millions of the people of India, and that is a large task even for a proud Empire, Perhaps it may be that, though I am standing befere you on my trial, it is the British Empire itself that is on its trial before the bar of the world. There are more powerful forces at work in the world today than courts of law; there are elemental urges for freedom and food and security which are moving vast masses of people and history is being moulded by them. The future recorder of this history might well say that in the hour of supreme trial the Government of Britain and the people of Britain failed because they could not adapt themselves to a changing world. He may muse over the fate of empires which have always fallen because of this weakness and call it destiny. Certain causes inevitably produce certain results. We know the causes; the results are inexorably in this train.

It is a small matter to me what happens to me in this trial or subsequently. Individuals count for little ; they come and go, as I shall go when my time is up. Seven times I have been tried and convicted by British authority in India, and many years of my life lie buried within prison walls. An eighth time or ninth, and a few more years, make little difference.

But it is no small matter what happens to India and her millions of sons and daughters. That is the issue before me, and that ultimately is the issue before you, sir. If the British Government imagines it can continue to exploit them and play baout with them against their will, as it has done for so long in the past, then it is grievously mistaken. It has misjudged their present temper and read history in vain.

(From Jawaharlal Nehru's statement at his trial in (1940).

(*A Nationalist on Trial*).

Comments : Nehru, in this passage, was speaking at a solemn and historic moment. He easily have been tempted to indulge in flights of rhetoric, in demagogy. Many nationalist speakers and writers do just that. Their speeches are full of high-flown phrases and well-worn cliches about colonial exploitation, freedom, democracy, and so on. Nehru avoids this. He speaks simply and clearly and with dignity. Only one phrase, 'in the hour of supreme trial', comes near to being a cliche, and this may be excused by its aptness in this context. In general his language is restrained, and he avoids the hysteria and excitement that such a moment might bring. At the same time we are aware of the feeling he is controling. The unselfish pride of a national leader, who puts his people's future welfare before his own freedom, gives a depth and poignancy to his words.

(7)

Already it becomes very hot here. In the trees the Hot Weather Bird calls and calls, like one heralding a disaster. Flying foxes hang head downwards in bunches in the trees around the courts, and the smell of them reaches into our office, so rank it is. All the world is now eating mangoes and throwing away the stones so that the ground is littered

with them, and after the mangoes come many flies, and after the flies the cholera, which rages here every season without any failing.

Very sordid, very dirty a place is Myosenin, and yet along the river banks it is beautiful. Down on the tide come water hyacinths in purple and green masses, like pretty eide-rdowns of flowers floating over the water. The sunset paints the river the colour of opals and in it the golden pagoda mirrors itself, a smaller replica of the golden pagoda in Rangoon. White paddy birds come winging along over the river, and for a little while the dirth and squalor of the bazaar fades from the mind.

To-day I went to a hanging.

It was Mr. Chelston who took me.

'One of these days you will have to attend these things on your own. Better learn the ropes now', he said to me. So we repaired to the jail. It is a sad place of brick, clean inside and standing amongst many acres of vegetables, which the convicts themselves bring up by hand. I do not think that prison is much deterrent to the Burman, nor as far as that goes, to the less educated Indian. There is no shame attach-ed to sojourn there, and you get free and good food at regular intervals. Only the lack of women and tobacco are regarded as deprivations. Many of the older Burmans. I learn, hastily commit some offence when they are liberated, so that they may return there again. . . . .

For myself I had no wish to participate at the hanging and asked Mr. Chelston why this was necessary. He then informed me of strange custom amongst these people. They do not greatly object to being hanged so long as there is a Government official present at the hanging. If no official is present, there may be a great deal of fuss. And the reason for this is a simple one. You can hang a man's body and so be rid of it. But you cannot hang his soul. There his soul is, and must remain always in the jail, unless given special permission to depart by a Government official or other authority.

The Burmese people are very particular about this, and Mr. Chelston told me how only the previous week the wife of Ba Hla, our clerk, deceased of cholera, had arrived in the

office to ask him to dismiss her husband officially, as although his body was indeed dead, his soul still remained over the Petty Cash book because as yet he had not had the official sack.

Whereupon Mr. Chelston gaven her a paper whiech said that Maung Ba Hla had been a good and faithful servant and left the situation through no fault, but with the Commissioner's full permission and consent, and so the lady departed very happy taking away the soul of her husband with her.

All this Mr. Chelston told me while we waited for our hanging. The prisoner had done many cruel actions and looked at the last a trifle ashamed of himself. As he stood upon the gallows, Mr. Chelston raised his topee in his polite manner and said in his quiet voice :

'Maung Lu Gale, committed to death for murder, you may leave this jail with my full permission and consent',. After which Maung Lu Gale did so.

(Letters from an Indian Judge to an English Gentlewoman (1934). (*A. Letter from Burma*).

Comments : There are some small faults of English in this passage. It is more idiomatic to write, 'without fail' than 'without any failings' (end of first paragraph). At the beginning of the second paragraph the indefinite article is misplaced. It would be more correct to write : 'A very sordid, very dirty place is Mysoein'. In spite of this passage as a whole is clear and clean English. It conveys a vivid impression of Myosein. The writing is simple and concrete. Although an Englishman would not speak of bringing vegetables up by hand (paragraph 5), the phrase is both vivid and humorous.

(8)

Mr. Jones, of the Manor Farm, had locked the henhouse for the night, but was too drunk to remember to shut the pop-holes. With the ring of light from his lantern dancing from side to side, he lurched across the yard, kicked off his boots at the back door, drew himself a last glass of beer from the barrel in the scullery, and made his way up to bed, where Mr. Jones was already snoring.

As soon as the light in the bedroom went out there was a stirring and a fluttering all through the farm buildings. Word had gone round during the day that old Major, the prize Middle White boar, had as strange dream on the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals. It had been agreed that they should all meet in the big barn as soon as Mr. Jones was safely out of the way. Old Major (so he was always called, though the name under which he had been exhibited was Willington Beauty) was so highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say.

At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already ensconced on his bed of straw, under a lantern which hung from a beam. He was twelve years old and had lately grown rather stout, but he was still a majestic looking pig, with a wise and benevolent appearance in spite of the fact that his tushes had never been cut. Before long the other animals began to arrive and make themselves comfortable after their different fashions. First came the three dogs, Bluebell, Jessie, and Pincher, and then the pigs, who settled down in the straw immediately in front of the platform. The hens perched themselves on the window-sills, the pigeons fluttered up to the rafters, the sheep and cows lay down behind the pigs and began to chew the cud. The two cart-horses, Boxer and Clover, eame in together, walking very slowly and setting down their vast hairy hoofs with great care lest there should be some small animal concealed in the straw. Clover was a stout motherly mare approaching middle life, who had never quite got her figure back after her fourth foal. Boxer was an enormous beast, nearly eighteen hands high, and as strong as any two ordinary horses put together. A white stripe down his nose gave him a somewhat stupid appearance, and in fact he was not of first-rate intelligence, but he was universally respected for his steadiness of character and tremendous powers of work. Afteri the horses came Muriel, the white goat, and Benjamin, the donkey. Benjamin was the oldest animal on the farm, and the worst tempered. He seldom talked, and when he did, it was usually to make some cynical remarks—for instance he would say that God had

given him a tail to keep the flies off, but that he would sooner have had no tail and no flies. Alone among the animals on the farm he never laughed. If asked why, he would say that he saw nothing to laugh at. Nevertheless, without openly admitting it, he was devoted to Boxer ; the two of them usually spent their Sundays together in the small paddock beyond the orchard, grazing side by side and never speaking.

(George Orwell: Animal Farm (1945).

[*A Farmyard Meeting*].

Comments : This is the beginning of George Orwell's moral fable, Animal Farm. His style is an excellent one for story-telling. It is very clear and easy to follow, and it moves quickly. There is empty cackle ; he gets straight down to the "osses". The animals are introduced briefly but with touches of detail to indicate their characters. His language is neither colloquial nor stilted ; it flows smoothly so that we are borne along on the story without being conscious of a particular style.

EXERCISES

(*Solutions in Outlines*)

A. Applied Criticism in Poetry

1

River ! River ! little River !
Bright you sparkle on your way,
O'er the yellow pebbles dancing,
Through the flowers and foliage glancing,
Like a child at play.

River ! River ! swelling River !
On you rush o'er rough and smooth—
Louder, faster, brawling, leaping
Over rocks, by rose-banks sweeping,
Like impetuous youth.

River ! River ! brimming River !
Broad and deep and still as Time,
Seeming still yet still in motion,
Tending onward to the ocean,
Just like mortal prime.

River ! River ! rapid River !
Swift now you slip away,
Swift and silent as an arrow,
Through a channel dark and narrow,
Like life's closing day.

River ! River ! headlong River !
Down you dash into the sea ;
Sea, that line hath never sounded,
Sea, that voyage had never rounded,
Like eternity.

The River : (Mrs. Southey)

(*i*) The rise, flow and ultimate fate of rivers is compared with the various stages of human life. At first the river sparkles and dances through natural scenery, just as a child does in human life. Then the river begins to swell and rush violently through banks and rocks, like some youth boisterously pushing forward through difficulties. Then, appearing still and unruffled the same river quietly flows onward in imitation of a person of mature age who steadily makes his way through the world without losing his balance of mind. In the next stage the river resembles a man in the closing years of advancing towards death, for it rushes towards the sea. Lastly, the river dashes headlong into some unmeasured and untravelled ocean, just as human life crosses the limits of worldly existence, and is lost in some unknown and maysterious world beyond.

(*ii*) The metre is suited to the subject. The length of the lines and the trouchaic measure are both appropriate to suggest the dancing, sweeping, brimming qualities of a river. The first four lines of each stanza deal with the river, and the fifth in each case refers to human life.

(*iii*) There are no complete or full-drawn pictures of a river, but there are a number of picturesque touches, *e.g.* 'O'er the yellow pebbles dancing'. 'Broad and deep and still as Time'.

(*iv*) The poem is an instance of an ordinary natural phenomenon inspiring the poet's reflections on the problems of life. The reflection in this case is buoyant and cheerful. The outlook on life and death is full of sportiveness. The mystery of death does not frighten or overwhelm the poetess. The picture of the rapid river, of its joyous surroundings, the shortness of the lines, the easy lilt of the trochaic metre, all these help to keep up the sunny cheerfulness of the comparison between life and a river.

(2)

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll !
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain.

Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore : upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan:
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests, in all time,—
Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime,
The image of eternity, the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made : each zone
Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

(*The Ocean* : Byron).

(*i*) This is an address to the ocean. Men traverse the ocean in countles ships and fleets, but yet they cannot control the sea. Man's deeds and misdeeds are confined to the land only. The ocean itself may bring ruin upon objects within its reach but there is no power that can inflict hurt on the sea. The damage that man can do on the ocean is quite insignificant : in fact, it is limited to men destroying each other in a naval battle, when the combatants perish miserably.

On account of its power and mystery, the ocean is a symbol of God and His infinity. In hot countries and in cold, in storm, the ocean symbolizes and suggests God's eternity. Not only the awe, strength, vastness and such other inspiring qualities, but even the baser aspects of the ocean are impressive : for instance, huge sea-monsters are produced out of the slime and oozy mud of the sea. the ocean is a mighty power at all times.

(*ii*) The rhyme-scheme of the two stanzas answers to the arrangement a, b, a, b, b, c, b, c, c. The rhythm is slow, heavy and majestic in tone. The grandeur of the tone is due to the frequent use of long, broad and imposing vowel sounds,

especially of the sound in the first stanza. The last syllables of most of the lines are impressive and suggest a slow, heavy motion. This is in keeping with the hugeness and majesty of the ocean. The lines echo, as it were, the deep, grave rumbling of the ocean. Phrases such as 'unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown'; 'in breeze, or gale, cyclone, or storm'; 'boundless, endless, sublime'; and 'dread, fathomless', strike our ears like the heaving and surging of mighty waves in mid-ocean.

(3)

Mysterious night ! when our first parent knew
    Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
    Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue ?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew.
    Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
    Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo ! Creation widened in man's view.
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
    Within thy beams, O Sun ! or who could find,
    Whilst floor and leaf and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind !
    Why do we then shun Death with anxious strife?
    If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life ?

(*Night* : Joseph Blanco White)

(*i*) Night is addressed. When the first man (Adam) learnt for the first time that day would be followed by night, he must have been grieved to think that the beautiful dome of the sky be obscured by darkness. However, we know that when the sun actually sets, the sky does not disappear, but is lit up with innumerable twinkling stars. Instead of losing the view of the heavens, we can see more clearly at nightfall how wide and unlimited God's universe is. The sun's light does help us to see small earthly things, such as leaves and flowers, but it conceals from our view the glory of the stars and the planets. This naturul observation should lead us to hope that just as our fear of darkness is after all unjustified, our fear of death, too, may be unjustifiable. Death, like darkness, may reveal undreamt of glories.

(*ii*) The poem is a sonnet. The lines are in the iambic metre, each one having five feet. The rhyme-scheme is a, b, b, a, a, b, b, a, c, d, c, d, e, e. The lost two lines which are in the form of questions emphaize the poet's main idea. Exclamation and interrogation are employed for emphasis.

(*iii*) The imagery is in harmony with the grandeur of the subject matter of the poem. The heavens, the sun, the stars, light, darkness, life and death are crowded into a single stanza. The beauty of the imagery lies more in its suggestiveness than in detail.

(*iv*) The poem is an example in which natural phenomena lead to a reflection of the higher problems of life. We know that sunset does not leave us completely without some compensation. All the glory of the heavens would be unknown to us but for the setting of the sun. Death, also, it is to be hoped, will reveal to the soul greater glories than those we know of on this earth.

(4)

Hear the mellow wedding bells—
Golden bells'.
What a world of happiness their harmony foretell !
Through the balmy air of night :
How they ring out their delight ;
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon !
Oh, from out the sounding cells !
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells !
How it swells,
How it dwells
On the future ! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging ? and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells !

(*The Bells* : E. A. Poe).

(*i*) (*a*) The rapturous chiming of wedding bells, floating and re-echoed in a joyous atmosphere, is the source of the cheif pleasure of the verses. The verses do not preach a morta-al, do nor they discuss the mystery and majesty of life, death and the universe. They only imitate the bewitching harmony of wedding bells. As we read these lines, our mind seems to become as full of the chiming and pealing of the bells, as the atmosphere was when the wedding bells were actually rung. The bells spread the joyous tidings of the wedding on the very winds. Their swift, uninterrupted peal fills our imagination, till we feel that our senses are lulled or stunned by the gushing overflow of joy which their chiming proclaims.

(*b*) This exquistite effect is produçed mainly by the frequent and effective use of the sound l, m, n, d. The thud of the 'd' sound seems to supply the start, the nasals give the twang, and the liquid 'l' makes the peal lilt and swing and float upon the ears. The sounds dance upon our ears till the last note of music has been drunk in by us.

(*Ii*) These lines (8, 9, 10) contain beautiful imagery. The dove gloats on the moon, and while so occupied, the music of the bells floats towards her. To impress the idea of 'liquidity' the soft 'I' sound is skilfully repeated in these lines.

(5)

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run ;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
To swell the ground, and plump the hezel shells
With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy song soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers :
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep,
Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they ?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
Ane full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ;
Aedge-crickets sing ; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft ;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

(*To Autumn* : John Keats).

Make an analysis of the imagery of the poem. What is the dominant type of imagery in the stanza ; In the second stan za ? In the third stanza ? Discuss the relationship of the type of imagery emphsized and the phase of autumn depicted in each stanza.

Make an analysis of the sound-pattern of third stanza. Which of the lines makes the most effective use of alliteration and assonance ? Study the nature of the rhymes, and consider to what extent they contribute to the effect of the poem.

What particularly striking examples of onomatopoeia do you find in this poem ?

What is the major feeling evoked in each stanza of the poem ? If there are subordinate or contrasting feelings, what are they ? Are the feelings evoked by this poem a significant element in its effect ? Why ?

Discuss the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the personification of Autumn in this poem.

(6)

The world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

(*The World is Too Much With Us* : William Wordsworth)

In the context of this poem, what does Wordsworth mean by "the world" ? By what means does he establish his attitude toward the world ? What conception of nature is built up in the second half of the octave ?

What is the problem the poet faces ? Where is it set forth ? What resolution of the conflict is suggested in the sestet ?

Analyze the sound pattern of lines 5 and 6 and 13 and 14. Is alliteration or assonance the more conspicuous element in the sound-pattern of these lines ? What does the rhyme scheme contribute to the tone of this sonnet ?

What are the major symbols in this poem, and what is their relationship ? If Proteus and Triton are not to be considered merely as figures that appeal to the romantic imagin-

ation, what do they symbolize ? What relationship do they have to the "creed outworn" and to Wordsworth's attitude toward "the world"?

B. Applied Criticism of Prose

Exercises—Solutions in Outlines

Passage 1

In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed ; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns ; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great ; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds : I, therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise.

(Samuel Johnson : *Preface to the Dictionary*).

Passage 2

I have presumed to mark the moment of conception : I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and,

perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and aggreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious. (Edward Gibbon : *Memoirs*)

Critical Appreciation in Outlines, Passage 1 and 2.

These two passages are not quite fair examples, since both Johnson and Gibbon were writers who, in their vocabulary and sentence structure, ordinarily departed somewhat from the 'familiar' and affected what is sometimes called the 'grand' style—Gibbon with the rise and fall of his dignified sentences that suit the march of his history, and Johnson with his classical vocabulary (though this element in his prose is often exaggerated) and sounding antithesis. However, they will serve, as showing, paradoxically, that the grand style can be exalted by allying and in some measure subordinating its characteristics to a certain direct simplicity of diction with which both writers express, naturally and unconsciously, a personal emotion. The occasion, and the theme of ultimate fulfilment inspire a kind of prose in which fact is transformed into something more than fact.

(Adapted from the *Best English* : G. H. Vallins)

Passage 3

Though I have now travelled the Sussex-down upwards of thirty years, yet I still investigate that chain of majestic mountains with fresh admiration year by year ; and think, I see new beauties every time I traverse it. Perhaps I may be singular in my opinion, and not so happy as to convey to you the same idea ; but I never contemplate these mountains without thinking I perceive somewhat analogous to growth in their gentle swellings and smooth fungus-like protuberances, their fluted sides, and regular hollows and slopes, that carry at once the air of vetative dilatation and expansion . . . . Or was there ever a time when these immense masses of calcarious matter were thrown into fermentation by some adventitious moisture ; were raised and leavened into such

shapes by some plastic power; and so made to swell and heave their broad backs into the sky, so much above the less animated clay of the wild below?

(Gillbert White : *The Natural History of Selborne*)

Critical Appreciation in Outlines : Passage 3

There are passages in the *Selborne* that are more lyrical than this; but this is a remarkable example of the alliance of matter with manner. White, lost in his admiration of this 'chain of majestic mountains', suddenly takes to mountainous words—*protuberances*, *vegetative*, *dilation*, *calcarious*, *fermentation*, *adventitious*; and the general effect is not turgid, but curiously poetic, the piling up of syllables corresponding with the piling up of the 'calcarious matter' that forms the downs themselves.

Passage 4

You may here talk of one of the candidates 'losing his deposit'. It may be myself. My venture has been described as a 'bombshell': I am well aware that it may turn out to be a cockleshell. This is a strange thing. Before I can ask for votes I must hand over £150; and if I do not get one-eighth of the votes polled I shall 'forfeit my deposit', that is, I shall lose my £150. Why on earth should I, or anyone else, be fined £150 for failure? It is like hitting a man when he is down, is it not? And why is he down? Because he sought to serve the State. It is like the umpire saying to a cricketer, 'You are out, sir. May I add that you are out for a duck? And now you will be hit on the head with a bat.'

This undemocratic device was begun in the Representation of the People Act, 1918. The object was to discourage 'freaks'. But what is a 'freak'? I was regarded as a 'freak' at my first election. But I was elected, and the official Conservative 'lost his deposit'. I did not gloat about that, as they do: I thought it was ridiculous and wrong. A Member said in 1917, 'It seems to me that if a man can get one vote he is justified in testing the opinions of the electorate.' But others said, 'We shall have all sorts of fellows coming in here.' In spite

of the deposit 'all sorts of fellows' are in Parliament now—and a good thing, too. The Parties have huge funds and insurance schemes. Their 'freaks, (if any) don't have to risk their own money. So the only people frightened away are genuine independents like myself.

I shall present a Bill to abolish the 'deposit'. This should be passed before the General Election.

A. P. Herbert : "I Object. A Letter to the Electors of East Harrow" (1958)

Comments in Outline :

A politician is here writing to his constituents and offering himself for election as an Independent candidate. He is speaking his mind clearly and vigorously. There is no euphemistic phraseology here, no smoke screen of words. His sentences are short and simple. On this issue of the deposit he has made it absolutely clear what he thinks and what he intends to do. A. P. Herbert has long been enemy of stilted and pretentious English and a champion of plain words. In this passage, he certainly practises what he preaches.

(Alan Warner)

Passage 5

The next day, the men returned with a pot of wine. They were all fully dressed as if they were going to a big clan meeting or to pay a visit to a neighbouring village. They passed their cloths under the right armpit, and hung their goatskin bags and sheathed matchets over their left shoulders. Okwokno got ready quickly and the party set out with Ikemefuna carrying the pot of wine. A deathly silence descended on Okwonko's compound. Even the very little children seemed to know. Throughout that day Nwoye sat in his mother's hut and tears stood in his eyes.

At the beginning of their journey the men of Umuofia talked and laughed about the locusts, about their women, and about some effeminate men who had refused to come with them. But as they drew near to the outskirts of Umuofia, silence fell upon them too.

The sun rose slowly to the centre of the sky, and the dry, sandy footway began to throw up the heat that lay buried in it. Some birds chirruped in the forests around. The men trod dry leaves on the sand. All else was silent. Then from the distance came the faint beating of the ekwe. It rose and faded with the wind, a peaceful dance from a distant clan.

'It is an ozo dance,' the men said among themeselves. But no one was sure where it was coming from. Some said Ezimili, others Abeme or Aninta. They argued for a short while and fell into silence again, and the elusive dance rose and fell with the wind. Somewhere a man was taking one of the titles of his clan, with music and dancing and a great feast.

The footway had now become a narrow line in the heart of the forest. The short trees and sparse undergrowth which surrounded the men's village began to give way to giant trees and climbers which perhaps had stood from the beginning of things, untouched by the axe and the bush-fire. The sun breaking through the leaves and branches threw a pattern of light and shade on the sandy footway.

Chinua Achebe : *Things Fall Apart* (1958)

Comments in Outline :

This is a passage from a novel by a young Nigerian writer. It is a good example of simple but effective narrative—and descriptive writing. It is clean and crisp, and flows easily. The detail is carefully observed and thoroughly concrete. Although the writer does not underline it, the feeling of apprehension is strongly present. The reader knows what the end of the journey will bring, so that the silence of the forest and the sounds of dancing from far-off are ominous.

(Alan Warner)

GLOSSARY

(1) Prosody

Here are the four commonest feet in English poetry :

(1) Iambus ⌣ / (tee-tum)

(2) Trochee / ⌣ (tum-tee)

(3) Anapaest ⌣ ⌣ / (tee-tee-tum)

(4) Dectyl / ⌣ ⌣ (tum-tee-tee)

Occasionally the following are used :

(5) Amphibrach ⌣ / ⌣

(6) Spondee / /

(7) Pyrrhic ⌣ ⌣

In marking the stressed syllables, the "macron" sign— may be employed instead of the symbol used here, but it is useful to be able to indicate a syllable which while not "slack" (unstressed), nevertheless does not carry a full stress. By using this sign / for a fully stressed syllable, we are enabled to make a clear distinction between full and half stresses by \ for the latter. For example, a true Pyrrhic foot rarely occurs ; it is much more frequently a slack syllable followed by a lightly stressed one : ⌣\.

In Sprung Rhythm and Free Verse, stress is still the basis of the rhythm, but here, three, four, or more slack syllables may be grouped with each stressed one.

The metre of a poem depends on the number of feet to the line and the pattern of the stanzas as well as the kind of feet used.

A line containing	one	foot	is	called	a	monometer.
,, ,, ,,	two	feet	,,	,,	,,	dimeter.
,, ,, ,,	three	,,	,,	,,	,,	trimeter.
,, ,, ,,	four	,,	,,	,,	,,	tetrameter.
,, ,, ,,	five	,,	,,	,,	,,	pentameter.
,, ,, ,,	six	,,	,,	,,	,,	an hexameter.
,, ,, ,,	seven	,,	,,	,,	,,	an heptameter.
,, ,, ,,	eight	,,	,,	,,	,,	an octameter.

The chief English Stanzas are :

(*a*) **Ballad Metre.**

Four line stanzas consisting of alternate iambic tetrameters and trimeters and riming *a b c b.*

> Chide Maurice hunted the Silver Wood,
> He whistled and he sang :
> "I think I see the woman yonder
> That I have love'd lang."
>
> ("Childe Maurice")

(*b*) **The Heroic Couplet.**

Iambic pentameters timing *aa bb*, etc. (*i.e.* in couplets).

> And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
> Each silver vase in mystic order laid,
> First, robed in white, the Nymph intent adores,
> With head uncovered, the Cosmetic Pow'rs.
>
> ("The Rape of the Lock")

(*c*) **Blank Verse.**

Unrimed iambic pentameters.

> Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
> Of that forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
> Sing, Heavenly Muse.
>
> ("Paradise Lost")

(*d*) **Spenserian Stanza.**

Nine-lined stanza consisting of eight iambic pentameters followed by one Alexandrine (iambic haxameter) Rimes *ab ab bc bc c.*

Lo I the man, whose Nurse whilome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shepheards weeds !
Am now enforst a far unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to change mine Oaten reads,
And sign of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds !
Whose prayses having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broad amongst her learned throng :
Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moralize my
song.

("Faerie Queene")

(*e*) **Sonnet.**

Petrarcan, Shakespearian or Miltonic. (See Chapter III).

(*f*) **Rime Royal.**

Seven iamblc pentameters riming *ab ab bc c.*

The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovynge, how his aventures fellen
From wo to wele, and after out of joie,
My purpose is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thow help me for t'endite
This woful vers, that wepen as I write.

("Troilus and Criseyde")

(*g*) **Ottava Rima.**

Eight iambic pentameters riming *ab ab ab cc.*

My poem's epic, and is meant to be
Divided in twelve books ! each book containing,
With love, and war, a heavy gale at sea,
A list of ships, and captains, and kings reigning,
New characters ; the episodes are three :
A panoramic view of hell's in training,
After the style of Virgil and of Homer,
So that my name of Epic's no misnomer

("Don Juan")

(2) Technical Devices

(*a*) **Caesura.** The pause dividing a line of verse into two parts.

Satan exalted sat || by merit raised.
("Paradise Lost")

(*b*) **End-stopped line.** A line ending in a pause.

Wherto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend replied :
Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering.
("Paradise Lost")

(*c*) **Run-on line enjambment.** Here the sense comes straight through without a pause from the end of one line to the beginning of the next.

But see ! the angry victor hath recalled His ministers of vengeance and pursuit Back to the gates of Heaven.
("Paradise Lost")

(*d*) **Weak Ending.** The slack, or unstressed, tenth syllable in an unrimed iambic pentameter.

Since what I am to say must be but that
Which contradicts my accusation, *and*
But what comes from myself.
("The Winter's Tale")

(*e*) **Feminine Ending.** The slack, or unstressed, eleventh syllable in an unrimed iambic pentameter.

If you would not so,
You pity not the state, nor the *remembrance*
Of his most sovereign name.
("The Winter's Tale")

(3) Kinds of Poetry

(*a*) **Lyrical Poetry**

Short and intensely personal and passionate poems (*e.g.*) sonnet, ode (extended lyric), elegy, song).

(*b*) **Dramatic Poetry**

Comedy, Tragedy, Masque, Monodrama. All these

have in common the use of characters and an attempt to represent the speech and actions of human beings.

(*c*) **Narrative Poetry**

Poetry which tells a story (*e.g.* short tales in verse ; epic, romance).

(*d*) **Didactic Poetry**

Poetry which teaches. Allegory and Satire.

(*e*) **Descriptive Poetry**

Direct description of scenes and places well as :

Pastoral : Poetry dealing with a "golden age" in which the main characters are idealized shepherds and shepherdesses.

Eclogue : consisting of dialogues between "pastoral" shepherds.

Idyll : smooth and idealized description of rural or domestic life.

(*f*) **Humorous Poetry**

Burlesque : poetry which ridicules ideas or things ; mock-heroic.

Parody : poetry which *imitates* the style of another poet with the intent to poke fun at it.

(4) The Science of Rhetoric in Prose

(*i*) **Metaphor**

Most people know roughly what a Metaphor is ; it is the most important figure or speech, and the commonest. Even in the most ordinary conversation we often use metaphors without knowing that we do so : 'You are a donkey !' 'I am in the soup.' 'We shall have to wait for that till our ship comes in.' Metaphor is that figure of speech in which one thing (or idea, place, person, deed and so forth) is compared to another, without acknowledging in a form of words ('Like', 'as', 'as if', 'even as'...) that any comparison is being made.

'My Love is *like a red, red rose*'

is a simile, but

'For nothing this wide universe I can
Save thou, *my Rose*' is a metaphor
'Boys and girls tumbling in the street, and
playing, were *moving jewels*'.

(*ii*) **Simile**

A simile is very like a metaphor, in that it makes a comparison, but in simile we use a word, generally 'like' or 'as', to show that it is a comparison. This figure too is common in ordinary speech, many similes has become *cliches* : 'He is as fit as a fiddie' ; "The cat is as black as ink and as fat as butter' ; 'He drinks like a fish'. A simile may be used in order to make something clearer or merely as an ornament. For example :

(*a*) 'You will be overwhelmed, like Tarpeia, by the heavy wealth which you have extracted from tributary generations.'

Newman : "The Scope and Nature of University Education".

(*b*) 'In the distance beyond the blue waters of the lake, and nearly screened by intervening foliage, was seen a shining speck, the rival capital of Tezcuco, and, still further on, the dark belt of porphyry, girdling the valley around like a rich setting which Nature had devised for the fairest of her jewels.'

Prescott : "History of the Conquest of Mexico".

In poetry there are often long, sustained similes that are known as Epic Similes ; the same kind of device may occur in prose :

(*c*) 'Too generally the very attainment of any deep repose seemed as if mechanically linked to some fatal necessity of self-interruption. It was as though a cup were gradually filled by the sleepy overflow of some natural fountain, the fulness of the cup expressing symbolically the completeness of the rest : but then, in the next stage of the process, it seemed as though the rush and torrent like babbling of the redundant

waters, when running over from every part of the cup, interrupted the slumber which in their earlier stage of silent gathering they had so naturally produced.

De Quincey : "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater".

(*iii*) **Analogy**

In English we need some word for a figure of speech that seems to be half-way between a simile and a metaphor ; perhaps Analogy will serve. This is a comparison in which some acknowledgment is made, but, as it were, indirectly; perhaps two examples will make this distinction clear.

(*a*) 'I do not believe that Rafael taught Mich. Angelo, or that Mich. Angelo taught Refael, any more that I believe that the Rose teaches the Lilly how to grow, or the Apple tree teches the Pear tree how to bear Fruit.'

William Blake : ("In marginal note on Reynold's Discourses").

(*b*) 'Let me make use of an illustration. In the combination of colours, very diffirent results are produced by a different in their selection and ceustaposition; red, green, and white change their shades, according to the contrast to which they are submitted. And, in like manner, the drift and meaning of a branch of knowledge varies with the company in which it is introduced to the student.'

Newman : ("The Scope and Nature of University Education").

Analogy may extend over several pages. Its proper function is to make something clear, but the trick of making something less clear by an analogy that is not really illuminating and only appears to be so is so common that in logic it is given the special name of *false analogy*.

(*iv*) **Personification.**

This is another very common figure of speech and is really a typical kind of metephor, in which some object, place or

abstract idea is turned into a person with human attributes so that we can talk about it more intellgibly or vigorously. This too is often used in common speech ; 'America is concerned about the Far Eastern question' or 'Charity seeketh not its own' and the personification of God as a male figure has led to much eccentricity of speech and theology.

(*a*) 'The old houses can always chatter of what has fallen from them by indiscreet neglect or foolish care, and all must regret the blotting of the little unnecessary trifles that were part of their nobility, like the grassy spaces between the garden wall and the public road, where the fowls paraded, and the ivy was plaited with periwinkle to the edge of the gutter. These middle-aged houses make no such appeal. They gibber in premature senility, between tragedy and comedy.'

EDWARD THOMAS : ("Rain")

(*b*) 'But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her Poppy, and deals with the memory men without distinction to merit of perpetuity.'

SIR THOMAS BREWN : ("Urn Burial")

(*v*) **Euphemism**

This is usually a form of Methonymy or Metaphor, but the figure is often defined by its purpose rather than by the technique used. It is the device of using p substituted expression to disguise some fact or idea that is distressing, offensive, or embarrassing. We say someone is 'tight' or 'tiddly' when we mean 'drunk'; a friend may have 'passed away' or be leading a 'wild' life. Euphemism is rather overdone in English; it is some times desirable to avoid causing pain, but can become mealy-mouthed and silly. Sensible people will be guided by the society they are in; some expressions may be acceptable in the family circle or private conversation, but not in a public lecture, but not in the pulpit. It is as rude to use euphemisms that other people do not understand, and so perhaps cause them embarrassment, as to use language that is too crude for the occasion.

(vi) **Hyperpole.**

Deliberate exaggeration for the sake of effect. Most of us use hyperbole every day without realizing that we are doing it, in such expressions as 'I nearly died of laughing'. "Thank you a thousand times' or 'You could have knocked me down with a feather'. The device is commoner in verse than in serious prose, but is also fairly common in prose, though not at the present day.

(a) 'Like other amphibious animals, we must come occasionally on shore : but the water is more properly our element, and in it, like them as we find our greatest security, so we exert our greatest force'.

Bolingbroke : ("The Idea of a Patriot King".

(*b*) 'The whole house was constantly in an inundation, under the discipline of mops and brooms and scrubbing brushes ; and the good housewives of those days were a kind of amphibious animal, delighting exceedingly to be dabbling in water—insomuch that a historian of the day gravely tells us, that many of his townswomen grew to have webbed fingers like unto a duck ; and some of them, he had little doubt, could the matter be examined into, would be found to have the tails of mermaids—but this I look upon to be a mere sport of fancy, or what is worse, a wilful misrepresentation'.

Washington Irving : ("A History of New York").

(*c*) 'The blue bird carries the sky on his back'.

(Thoreau.)

(*vii*) **Pun.**

(The early critics called this Paronomasia).

A play upon words, usually for comic effect, though there serious puns in such writers as Shakespeare and Donne. The pun is regarded as vulgar because many bad ones are made, and a person who is always making puns is a social nuisance ; but a good pun in the right place may be amusing and clever.

'I might suspect his thermometer (as indeed I did, for we Harvard men are apt to think ill of any graduation but our own) ; but it was a poor consolation.

> The fact remained that his herald Mercury, standing tiptoe, could look down on mine. I seem to glimpse something of this familiar weakness in Mr. White. He, too, has shared in these mercurial triumphs and defeats'.
>
> James Russell Lowell : ("My Study Windows".)

(*viii*) **Alliteration.**

The use of two or more words, near to each other, beginning with the same letter. This is much more common in verse than in prose and can be overdone in both, especially ; but it is agreeable in small quantities.

> 'It is he that puts into a man all the wisdom of the world without speaking a word...("He" is Death).
>
> Sir Walter Raleigh : ("A History of the World").

(*ix*) **Assonance.**

Similary of vowel sounds. This is commoner in poetry than in prose and can be a fault if it is too obvious in prose.

(*x*) **Onomatopoeia.**

Language in which the actual sound of the words suggests their meaning.

> 'The bees are buzzing and humming with great zest ; the doves are cooing ; and the children chatter as they clatter downstairs to come and dabble in the cool stream'.

(*xi*) **Irony.**

This is one of the most important figures of speech in English and one of the hardest to define accurately. The definition 'saying one thing while meaning another' is too wide ; it is not ironical, merely civil, to say 'I am so glad to see you' when we are thinking, 'I wish you had chosen a more convenient time to call'. Irony is saying one thing while meaning another, not in the sense of untruth or of the kind of double meaning found in pun and metaphor, but in the sense of meaning something different to someone else who hears the speech and is intelligent enough to see the further meaning, or equipped with the knowledge to

do so. The tone of voice or form the words shows what is intended. Meiosis may often be a form of irony. It is a highly sophisticated device and is found in many of the greatest writers. Fieiding's "Jonathan Wild", Swift's "A Modest Proposal" and Defoe's "The Shortest Way With the Dissenters" are examples of whole books which are ironical.

> "But dismissing Mrs. Slipslop was a point not so easily to be resolved upon: she had the utmost tenderness for her reputation, as she knew on that depended many of the most valuable blessings of life; particularly cards, making curt'sies in public places, and, above all, pleasure of demolishing the reputations of others, in which innocent amusement she had an extraordinary delight.'
>
> "Fielding : (Joseph Andrews")

Here Fielding is speaking half through Lad Booby's mouth directly, half in his own person; ironically. His phrasing makes it clear that he himself thinks the pleasures Lady Booby regards as trivial and the destruction of reputations far from innocent.

Dramatic irony is the special kind of irony, often found in a play, an irony of situation in which what is said on the stage means more to the audience than to the person who says it, or hears it. The Greek tragedies and *Macbeth* are full of dramatic irony. A living English writer who is a constant user of irony in his prose and dramas, irony both of language and of situation, is Somerset Maugham. Thomas Hardy made very great use of ironies of situation and even called a book of short stories *Life's Little Ironies*. Irony is favoured by the French even more than by the British.

Irony, which gives pleasures, relief or sitmulus and is a friendly device, seeming to take people into the writer's or speaker's confidence, should not be confused with sarcasm, which needs a victim, is used for the deliberate infliction of pain and is not a weapon for civilized people.

(*xii*) **Antithesis**

Emphasizing ideas by placing them in clear, direct contrast. This device may consist of a single sentence, or a

pair of words or phrases in a sentence ; or it may extend over several paragraphs. The Book of Proverbs is full of antitheses.

(*a*) 'Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge ; it is thinking makes what we read our.' John Locke : ("Of the Conduct of the Understanding")

(*b*) 'When a servant is called before his master, he does not come with an expectation to hear himself rated for some trivial fault, threatened to be stripped, or used with any other unbecoming language, which mean masters often give to worthy servants ; but it is often to know, what road he took that he came so readily back according to order ; whether he passed by such a ground ; if the old man who rents it is in good health ; or whether he gave Sir Roger's love to him, or the like.

A man who preserves a respect founded on his benevolence to his dependants, lives rather like a prince than as a master in his family ; his orders are received as favours rather than as duties : and the distinction of approaching him is part of the reward for executing what is commanded by him.'

Steele : ("The Spectator")

(*xiii*) **Epigram**

A short, pointed saying that may be more emphatic than a whols paragraph on the subject would be. An Aphorism is much the same thing, but does not necessarily have the touch of wit we find in an Epigram. Most proverbs are epigrams. Examples of prose epigrams will be found in large quantities in the essays of Francis Bacon and the stories and plays of Oscar Wilde.

(*xiv*) **Paradox**

This is generally epigrammatic in form and implies a strong antithesis ; it is a statement that on a first hearing sounds self-contradictory. It can be a very good device for provoking people to think about something a fresh, and was

much used for this purpose by G. K. Chesterton.

"Truth makes the greatest libel.'
Hazlitt : (On Wit and Humour)

'Nothing is so much to be feared as fear. Atheism may comparatively be popular with God Himself.'
—Thorean

(*xv*) **Oxymoron**

This is a paradox compressed into very few words. As a highly concentrated device, it is more suited to poetry :

'I could have been

A traitor then, a glorious, happy traitor......'
Drydyn : ("All for Love").

"Thou pure impiety and impious purity !'
Shakespeare : (Much Ado About Nothing).

It is, however, sometimes used in prose, in such phrases as 'an open secret' or 'the widest fool in Christendom'.

(*xvi*) **Repetition.**

It is natural and usual, in common speech, to repeat things for emphasis or emotional effect. In the minute subdivisions of rhetorical devices used in the sixteenth-century critical books, repetition was divided into many classes. Abraham Fraunce speaks of *Epizeuxis* or *Palilagia*—the simple repetition of words or phrases in the same form; *Anadiplosts*—that kind of repetition in which the last words of one sentence or phrase are repeated at the beginning of the next ; *Anaphora*—the repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of several sentences ; *Epistrope*—the repetition of words or phrases at the ends of sentences or shorter groups ; *Symploce*—repetition at both the beginning and end of a sentence ; *Epanalepsis*—the same word or phrase repeated at the end and the beginning of the same sentence : *Epanodos*—the same word or phrase repeated at the begin-ning and middle and end of a sentence ; *Polyoptoton*—the use of a word in several of its grammatical forms. Here are

some of Abraham Fraunce's examples (with modernized spelling) :

(*a*) 'The time is changed, my lute, the time is changed.'

(*b*) 'O stealing time, the subject of delay,
Delay the rack of unrefrain'd desire,
What strange design has thou my hopes to stay ?
My hopes which do but to mine own aspire ?'

(*c*) 'Old age is wise, and full of constant truth.
Old age well stayed from ranging humours lives.
Old age hath known, whatever was in youth,
Old age o'erecome the greater honour gives.'

(*d*) O no, he can not be good, that knows not why he is good,
But stands so far good, as his fortune may keep him unassailed.'

(*xvii*) **Plimax**

The arrangement of words, ideas and so on in order of increasing importance.

(*a*) "What is become of my rare jewels, my rich array, my sumptuous face, my waiting servants, my many friends and all my vain pleasures : my pleasures is banished by displeasure, my friends fled like foes, my servants gone, my feasting turned to fasting, my rich array consumed to rags, and jewels deck out any chiefest enemies.'

Thomas of Reading ("Anonymous", 1623)

(*b*) 'All that most maddens and torments ; all that stirs up the less of things : all truth with malice in it : cracks the sinews and cakes the brain ; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought ; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick.'

Herman Melville : (Moby Dick).

(*xxviii*) **Anti-Climax.**

(It is sometimes called Bathos). The arrangement ideas,

words or phrases so that the very last item is less important than those that have gone before. The reader is, as it were, let down with a bump. When this is done accidentally out of carelessness the effect is comic and the passage is spoilt.

> "Because one person dropped a cigarrete end, three houses were burned to the ground, a collection of irreplaceable books and curios was destroyed, four people lost their lives and Mrs. Robinson's washing was spoilt by the smoke.'

It may be used deliberately for an ironical purpose.

Here is an interesting passage in which the order of ideas seems like anti-climax, but the actual emotion effect is of climax ; in the ironic manner of Fielding, the implication is that the last occurrence, though the least important, would be the most astonishing :

> 'Suppose a stranger, who entered the chambers of a lawyer, being imagined a client when the lawyer was preparing his plan for the fee, should pull out a writ against him. Suppose an apothecary, at the door of a chariot containing some great doctor of eminent skill, should instead of directions to a patient present him with a portion for himself. Suppose a minister should, instead of a good round sum, treat my Lord ......or Sir......or Esq......with a good broomstick. Suppose a civil companion, or a led captain, should, instead of virtue, and honour, beauty, and parts and admiration thunder vice, and infamy, and ugliness, and folly, and contempt, in his patron's ears. Suppose when a tradesman first carries in his bill, the man of fashion should pay it ; or suppose, if he did so, the tradesman should, abate what he had overcharged, on the supposition of waiting.'

Fielding : (*Foseph Andxews*)

(*xix*) **Innuendo.**

Hinting at something without actually saying it. We all know the difference between, 'she looks a *nice girl*' and 'she *looks* a nice girl'. Irony may be a form of innuendo.

(*xx*) Periphrasis or Cricumlocution.

This is seldom desirable. It is the trick of style used by Polonius and by bad journalists and public speakers of saying in many words what could be better said in few. Its use in artistic writing is generally for comic effect or euphemism. *Redundancy* is the use of two words where either of them carries the meaning adequately, as in 'grateful thanks' or 'two equal halves'. When the two words are the same part of speech as in 'I am thankful and grateful' it is called Tautology. One form of Tautology that can be beautiful, however, is the 'doublet' of a Latin and a Saxon word in a solemn context, which may produce a beautiful rhythm : 'We acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickednesses.'

(*xxi*) Surprise Ending.

We are waiting for the end of a sentence and it is not what we expected; this may emphasize the point ; it is fairly common as a device in English.

> "Bartholomew Fair" is chiefly remarkable for the exhibition of odd humours and tumbler's tricks, and is on that account amusing to read once."
>
> Hazlitt : (*Lectures on the English Comic Writers*)

(*xxii*) Playful use of Colloquialism.

It is possible to write a piece of prose, especially an essay in quite a grave and formal style, then suddenly to lighten the atmosphere by some colloquial expression. There is no special name in English for this device. Churchill's famous 'Some chicken!' is one of the best imaginable examples of this device. In written prose too it usually has a mildly comic effect, or suggest that the writer feels friendly towards the reader. This is probably a colloquialism :

> 'They say the quickness of repartees in argumentative scenes receives an ornament from the verse. Now what is more unreasonable than to imagine that a man should not only light upon the wit, but the rhyme too, upon the sudden ? This nicking of him who spoke before both in sound and measure, is so

great a happiness, that you must at least suppose the persons of your play to be born poets......'

Dryden : (*Essay of Dramatic Poesy*)

(*xxiii*) **Conscious use of Cliche.**

I suppose this might be classified as a form of irony. It is possible to take some expression that everyone takes for granted and repeats, often as an excuse for not thinking, and to play with it so as to expose its emptiness or falsify. Here is an example from a book of political exposition ; it is somewhat emotional as compared with the rest of the book, but very successful as the dramatic climax to a dignified argument :

'Whenever I hear this suggestion that socialism is contrary to human nature, I want to ask the opposite question : Is capitalism contrary to human nature ? Is it contrary to human nature to give the highest pay to those who do no work at all; to give the lowest pay to those who do the heaviest work ? Is it contrary to human nature to pay ninety percent of the population so little that cannot buy enough to keep themselves in employment ? Is it contrary to human nature keep several million people permanently idle while they, and many others, lack the very goods that they ought to be producing ? Is it contrary to human nature deliberately to destroy food, clothes and many other forms of wealth, in order to render the production of further wealth profitable again ? Is it contrary to human nature so to arrange things that the only job on which men can get employment is building a mament with which to kill each other ? Is it contrary to human nature to send millions of men out to slaughter each other in order to decide who shall possess the markets of the world ? Is all this contrary the human nature ? I think it is.'

John Strachey : (*Why you should be a Socialist*)

The gentle modesty of the last sentence makes the climax more convincing. Cabbett is another writer who is

very fond of turning some catch-phrase against his adversary. It is also possible to take some insult or invective hurled at us by an opponent and modify it for our own use.

(*xxiv*) **Literalism.**

This trick is well suited to English as we have so many cliches and familiar idioms. The writer takes a familiar expression and plays with it, taking it in its literal sense instead of in its usual metaphorical sense. This can be irritating and profane when done too often, like the mannerism of a habitual punster, but the trick can be a useful counter-attack to rhetorial devices unskilfully used. It is frequently found in humorous prose passages in Shakespeare and in some of the modern light essayists.

Curtis : All ready; and therefore, I pray thee, news ?

Grumio : First, know, my horse is tired, my master and mistress fallen out.

Curtis : How ?

Grumio : Out of their saddles into the dirt ; and thereby

Curtis : Let's ha't, gaod Grumio.

Grumio : (Striking him) : There.

Curtis : This is to feel a tale, not to bear a tale.

Grumio : And therefore it is called a sensible tale.

Shakespeare : ("*The Taming of the Shrew*")

The first joke is literalism ; the final joke is a pun.

(*The Anatomy of Prose* : Marjorie Boulton)

criticism Prose & Poetry

crit - Prose